

A
RESIDENCE IN FRANCE,
DURING THE YEARS
1792, 1793, 1794, AND 1795;
DESCRIBED
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS
FROM AN
ENGLISH LADY:

WITH
GENERAL AND INCIDENTAL REMARKS
ON THE
FRENCH CHARACTER AND MANNERS.

PREPARED FOR THE PRESS
By JOHN GIFFORD, Esq.
AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF FRANCE, LETTER TO LORD
LAUDERDALE, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Plus je vis l'Etranger plus j'aimai ma Patrie.

DU BELLOY.

VOL. I.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

BY THE EDITOR.

THE following Letters were submitted to my inspection and judgement by the Author, of whose principles and abilities I had reason to entertain a very high opinion. How far my judgement has been exercised to advantage in enforcing the propriety of introducing them to the notice of the public, that public must decide. To me, I confess, it appeared, that a series of important facts, tending to throw a strong light on the internal state of France, during the most important period of the Revolution, could neither prove uninteresting to the general reader, nor indifferent to the future historian of that momentous epoch; and I conceived, that the apposite and judicious reflections of a well-formed and well-cultivated mind, naturally arising out of events within the immediate scope of its own observation, could not

in the smallest degree diminish the interest which, in my apprehension, they are calculated to excite. My advice upon this occasion was farther influenced by another consideration. Having traced, with minute attention, the progress of the revolution, and the conduct of its advocates, I had remarked the extreme assiduity employed (as well by translations of the most violent productions of the Gallic press, as by original compositions,) to introduce and propagate, in foreign countries, those pernicious principles which have already sapped the foundation of social order, destroyed the happiness of millions, and spread desolation and ruin over the finest country in Europe. I had particularly observed the incredible efforts exerted in *England*, and, I am sorry to say, with too much success, for the base purpose of giving a false colour to every action of the persons exercising the powers of government in France; and I had marked, with indignation, the atrocious attempt to strip vice of its deformity, to dress crime in the garb of virtue, to decorate slavery with the symbols of freedom, and to give to folly the attributes

attributes of wisdom. I had seen, with extreme concern, men, whom the lenity, *mistaken* lenity, I must call it, of our government had rescued from punishment, if not from ruin, busily engaged in this scandalous traffic, and, availing themselves of their extensive connections to diffuse, by an infinite variety of channels, the poison of democracy over their native land. In short, I had seen the British press, the grand palladium of British liberty, devoted to the cause of Gallic licentiousness, that mortal enemy of all freedom, and even the pure stream of British criticism diverted from its *natural* course, and polluted by the pestilential vapours of Gallic republicanism. I therefore deemed it essential, by an exhibition of well-authenticated facts, to correct, as far as might be, the evil effects of misrepresentation and error, and to defend the empire of truth, which had been assailed by a host of foes.

My opinion of the principles on which the present system of government in France was founded, and the war to which those principles gave rise, have been long since submitted to the public. Subsequent events,

far from invalidating, have strongly confirmed it. In all the public declarations of the Directory, in their domestic polity, in their conduct to foreign powers, I plainly trace the prevalence of the same principles, the same contempt for the rights and happiness of the people, the same spirit of aggression and aggrandizement, the same eagerness to overturn the existing institutions of neighbouring states, and the same desire to promote "the universal revolution of Europe," which marked the conduct of BRISSOT, LE BRUN, DESMOULINS, ROBESPIERRE, and their disciples. Indeed, what stronger instance need be adduced of the continued prevalence of these principles, than the promotion to the supreme rank in the state, of two men who took an active part in the most atrocious proceedings of the Convention at the close of 1792, and at the commencement of the following year?

In all the various constitutions which have been successively adopted in that devoted country, the welfare of the people has been wholly disregarded, and while they have been amused with the shadow
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of liberty, they have been cruelly despoiled of the substance. Even on the establishment of the present constitution, the one which bore the nearest resemblance to a rational system, the freedom of election, which had been frequently proclaimed as the very corner-stone of liberty, was shamefully violated by the legislative body, who, in their eagerness to perpetuate their own power, did not scruple to destroy the principle on which it was founded. Nor is this the only violation of their own principles. A French writer has aptly observed, that "*En révolution comme en morale, ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*:" thus the executive, in imitation of the legislative body, seem disposed to render *their* power perpetual. For though it be expressly declared by the 137th article of the 6th title of their present constitutional code, that the "Directory shall be partially renewed by the election of a new member *every year*," no step towards such election has been taken, although the time prescribed by the law is elapsed.---In a private letter from Paris now before me, written within these few days, is the following

observation on this very circumstance : " The constitution has received another blow. The month of *Vendemiaire* is past, and our Directors still remain the same. Hence we begin to drop the appellation of *Directory*, and substitute that of the *Cinqvir*, who are more to be dreaded for their power, and more to be detested for their crimes, than the *Decemvir* of ancient Rome." The same letter also contains a brief abstract of the state of the metropolis of the French republic, which is wonderfully characteristic of the attention of the government to the welfare and happiness of its inhabitants !

" The reign of misery and of crime seems to be perpetuated in this distracted capital : suicides, pillage, and assassinations, are daily committed, and are still suffered to pass unnoticed. But what renders our situation still more deplorable, is the existence of an innumerable band of spies, who infest all public places, and all private societies. *More than a hundred thousand* of these men are registered on the books of the modern SARTINE ; and as the population of Paris, at most,

most, does not exceed six hundred thousand souls, we are sure to find in six individuals one spy. This consideration makes me shudder, and, accordingly, all confidence, and all the sweets of social intercourse, are banished from among us. People salute each other, look at each other, betray mutual suspicions, observe a profound silence, and part. This, in few words, is an exact description of our modern republican parties. It is said, that poverty has compelled many respectable persons, and even state-creditors, to enlist under the standard of COCHON, (the Police Minister,) because such is the honourable conduct of our sovereigns, *that they pay their spies in specie---and their soldiers, and the creditors of the state, in paper.*---Such is the morality, such the justice, such are the republican virtues, so loudly vaunted by our good and *dearest* friends, our pensioners---the Gazetteers of England and Germany!"

There is not a single abuse, which the modern reformers reprobated so loudly under the ancient system, that is not magnified, in an infinite degree, under the present establishment.

ment. For one *Lettre de Cachet* issued during the mild reign of LOUIS the Sixteenth, a thousand *Mandats d' Arrêt* have been granted by the tyrannical demagogues of the revolution; for one *Bastille* which existed under the Monarchy, a thousand *Maisons de Detention* have been established by the Republic. In short, crimes of every denomination, and acts of tyranny and injustice, of every kind, have multiplied, since the abolition of royalty, in a proportion which sets all the powers of calculation at defiance.

It is scarcely possible to notice the present situation of France, without adverting to the circumstances of the WAR, and to the attempt now making, through the medium of negociation, to bring it to a speedy conclusion. Since the publication of my Letter to a Noble Earl, now destined to chew the cud of disappointment in the vale of obscurity, I have been astonished to hear the same assertions advanced, by the members and advocates of that party whose merit is said to consist in the violence of their opposition to the measures of government, on the origin

gin of the war, which had experienced the most ample confutation, without the assistance of any additional reason, and without the smallest attempt to expose the invalidity of those proofs which, in my conception, amounted nearly to mathematical demonstration, and which I had dared them, in terms the most pointed, to invalidate. The question of aggression before stood on such high ground, that I had not the presumption to suppose it could derive an accession of strength from any *arguments* which I could supply; but I was confident, that the *authentic documents* which I offered to the public would remove every intervening object that tended to obstruct the sight of inattentive observers, and reflect on it such an additional light as would flash instant conviction on the minds of all. It seems, I have been deceived; but I must be permitted to suggest, that men who persist in the renewal of assertions, without a single effort to controvert the proofs which have been adduced to demonstrate their fallacy, cannot have for their object the establishment of truth--- which ought, exclusively, to influence the
conduct

conduct of public characters, whether writers or orators.

With regard to the negotiation, I can derive not the smallest hopes of success from a contemplation of the past conduct, or of the present principles, of the government of France. When I compare the projects of aggrandizement openly avowed by the French rulers, previous to the declaration of war against this country, with the exorbitant pretensions advanced in the arrogant reply of the Executive Directory to the note presented by the British Envoy at Basil in the month of February, 1796, and with the more recent observations contained in their official note of the 19th of September last, I cannot think it probable that they will accede to any terms of peace that are compatible with the interest and safety of the Allies. Their object is not so much the *establishment* as the *extension* of their republic.

As to the danger to be incurred by a treaty of peace with the republic of France, though it has been considerably diminished
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by the events of the war, it is still unquestionably great. This danger principally arises from a pertinacious adherence, on the part of the Directory, to those very principles which were adopted by the original promoters of the abolition of Monarchy in France. No greater proof of such adherence need be required than their refusal to repeal those obnoxious decrees (passed in the months of November and December, 1792,) which created so general and so just an alarm throughout Europe, and which excited the reprobation even of that party in England, which was willing to admit the equivocal interpretation given to them by the Executive Council of the day. I proved, in the Letter to a Noble Earl before alluded to, from the very testimony of the members of that Council themselves, as exhibited in their *official* instructions to one of their confidential agents, that the interpretation which they had assigned to those decrees, in their communications with the British Ministry, was a *false* interpretation, and that they really intended to enforce the decrees, to the utmost extent of their possible operation,

operation, and, by a literal construction thereof, to encourage rebellion in every state, within the reach of their arms or their principles. Nor have the present government merely forborne to repeal those destructive laws---they have imitated the conduct of their predecessors, have actually put them in execution wherever they had the ability to do so, and have, in all respects, as far as related to those decrees, adopted the precise spirit and principles of the faction which declared war against England. Let any man read the instructions of the Executive Council to PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD, their Commissary in the Netherlands, in 1792 and 1793, and an account of the proceedings in the Low Countries consequent thereon, and then examine the conduct of the republican General BUONAPARTE, in *Italy*---who must necessarily act from the instructions of the Executive Directory---and he will be compelled to acknowledge the justice of my remark, and to admit that the latter are actuated by the same pernicious desire to overturn the settled order of society, which invariably marked the conduct of the former.

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“ It is an acknowledged fact, that every revolution requires a provisional power to regulate its *disorganizing movements*, and to direct the *methodical demolition of every part of the ancient social constitution*.---Such ought to be the *revolutionary power*.

“ To whom can such power belong, but to the French, in those countries into which they may carry their arms? Can they with safety suffer it to be exercised by any other persons? It becomes the French republic, then, to assume this kind of guardianship over the people whom she awakens to *Liberty!*”

Such were the *Lacedæmonian* principles avowed by the French government in 1792, and such is the *Lacedæmonian* policy† pursued by the French government in 1796! It

* *Considerations Générales sur l'Esprit et les Principes du Décret du 15 Décembre.* P. 184.

† MACHIAVEL justly observes, that it was the narrow policy of the Lacedæmonians always to destroy the ancient constitution, and establish their own form of government, in the counties and cities which they subdued.

cannot then, I conceive, be contended, that a treaty with a government still professing principles which have been repeatedly proved to be subversive of all social order, which have been acknowledged by their parents to have for their object *the methodical demolition of existing constitutions*, can be concluded without danger or risk. That danger, I admit, is greatly diminished, because the power which was destined to carry into execution those gigantic projects which constituted its object, has, by the operations of the war, been considerably curtailed. The *will* may exist in equal force, but the *ability* is no longer the same.

But though I maintain the existence of danger in a Treaty with the Republic of France, unless she previously repeal the decrees to which I have adverted, and abrogate the acts to which they have given birth, I by no means contend that it exists in such a degree as to justify a determination, on the part of the British government, to make its removal the *sine quâ non* of negotiation, or peace. Greatly as I admire the brilliant endowments

dowments of Mr. BURKE, and highly as I respect and esteem him for the manly and decisive part which he has taken, in opposition to the destructive anarchy of republican France, and in defence of the constitutional freedom of Britain; I cannot either agree with him on this point, or concur with him in the idea that the restoration of the Monarchy of France was ever *the object* of the war. That the British Ministers ardently desired that event, and were earnest in their endeavours to promote it, is certain; not because it was the object of the war, but because they considered it as the best *means* of promoting the object of the war, which was, and is, *the establishment of the safety and tranquillity of Europe, on a solid and permanent basis*. If that object can be attained, and the republic exist, there is nothing in the past conduct and professions of the British Ministers, that can interpose an obstacle to the conclusion of peace. Indeed, in my apprehension, it would be highly impolitic in any Minister, at the commencement of a war, to advance any *specific* object, the attainment of which should be declared to be

the *finè quâ non* of peace. If mortals could arrogate to themselves the attributes of the Deity, if they could direct the course of events, and controul the chances of war, such conduct would be justifiable; but on no other principle, I think, can its defence be undertaken. It is, I grant, much to be lamented that the protection offered to the friends of monarchy in France, by the declaration of the 29th of October, 1793, could not be rendered effectual: as far as the offer went it was certainly obligatory on the party who made it; but it was merely conditional---restricted, as all similar offers necessarily must be, by the *ability* to fulfil the obligation incurred.

In paying this tribute to truth, it is not my intention to retract, in the smallest degree, the opinion I have ever professed, that the restoration of the ancient monarchy of France would be the best possible means not only of securing the different states of Europe from the dangers of republican anarchy, but of promoting the real interests, welfare, and happiness of the French people themselves.

selfes. The reasons on which this opinion is founded I have long since explained ; and the intelligence which I have since received from France, at different times, has convinced me that a very great proportion of her inhabitants concur in the sentiment.--- The miseries resulting from the establishment of a republican system of government have been severely felt, and deeply deplored ; and I am fully persuaded, that the subjects and tributaries of France will cordially subscribe to the following observation on republican freedom, advanced by a writer who had deeply studied the genius of republics: “ *Di tutte le servitu dure, quella è durissima, che ti sotto-mette ad una repubblica ; l'una, perche è la più durabile, e manco si può sperarne d'usare: L'altra perche il fine della repubblica è enervare ed indebolire, per accrescere il corpo suo, tutti gli altri corpi.**”

London, Nov. 12,
1796.

JOHN GIFFORD.

P. S. Since I wrote the preceding remarks, I have been given to understand, that

* Discorsi di Niccolò Machiavelli, Lib. ii. p. 88.

by a decree, *subsequent* to the completion of the constitutional code, the first partial renewal of the Executive Directory was deferred till the month of March, 1797; and that, therefore, in this instance, the present Directory cannot be accused of having violated the constitution. But the guilt is only to be transferred from the Directory to the Convention, who passed that decree, as well as some others, in contradiction to a positive constitutional law.——Indeed, the Directory themselves betrayed no greater delicacy with regard to the observance of the constitution, or M. BARRAS would never have taken his seat among them; for the constitution expressly says, (and this positive provision was not even modified by any *subsequent mandate* of the Convention,) that no man shall be elected a member of the Directory who has not completed his fortieth year---whereas it is notorious that BARRAS had not this requisite qualification, having been born in the year 1758!

DEDICATION.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

SIR,

IT is with extreme diffidence that I offer the following pages to Your notice; yet as they describe circumstances which more than justify Your own prophetic reflections, and are submitted to the public eye from no other motive than a love of truth and my country, I may, perhaps, be excused for presuming them to be not altogether unworthy of such a distinction.

While Your puny opponents, if opponents they may be called, are either sunk into oblivion, or remembered only as associated with the degrading cause they attempted to support, every true friend of mankind, anticipating

icipating the judgement of posterity, views with esteem and veneration the unvarying Moralist, the profound Politician, the indefatigable Servant of the Public, and the warm Promoter of his country's happiness.

To this universal testimony of the great and good, permit me, Sir, to join my humble tribute; being, with the utmost respect,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

Sept. 12, 1796.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

AFTER having, more than once, in the following Letters expressed opinions decidedly unfavourable to female authorship, when not justified by superior talents, I may, by now producing them to the public, subject myself to the imputation either of vanity or inconsistency; and, I acknowledge, that a great share of candour and indulgence must be possessed by readers who attend to the apologies usually made on such occasions: yet I may with the strictest truth alledge, that I should never have ventured to offer any production of mine to the world, had I not conceived it possible that information and reflections collected and made on the spot, during a period when France exhibited a state, of which there is no example in the annals of mankind, might gratify curiosity without the aid of literary embellishment; and an adherence to truth, I

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flattered

flattered myself, might, in a subject of this nature, be more acceptable than brilliancy of thought, or elegance of language. The eruption of a volcano may be more scientifically described and accounted for by the philosopher; but the relation of the illiterate peasant who beheld it, and suffered from its effects, may not be less interesting to the common hearer.

Above all, I was actuated by the desire of conveying to my countrymen a just idea of that revolution which they have been incited to imitate, and of that government by which it has been proposed to model our own.

Since these pages were written, the Convention has nominally been dissolved, and a new constitution and government have succeeded, but no real change of principle or actors has taken place; and the system, of which I have endeavoured to trace the progress, must still be considered as existing, with no other variations than such as have been necessarily produced by the difference of time and circumstances. The people grew tired of

of massacres *en masse*, and executions *en detail*: even the national fickleness operated in favour of humanity; and it was also discovered, that however a spirit of royalism might be subdued to temporary inaction, it was not to be eradicated, and that the sufferings of its martyrs only tended to propagate and confirm it. Hence the scaffolds flow less frequently with blood, and the barbarous prudence of CAMILLE DESMOULINS' *guillotine economique* has been adopted. But exaction and oppression are still practised in every shape, and justice is not less violated, nor is property more secure, than when the former was administered by revolutionary tribunals, and the latter was at the disposition of revolutionary armies.

The error of supposing that the various parties which have usurped the government of France have differed essentially from each other is pretty general; and it is common enough to hear the revolutionary tyranny exclusively associated with the person of ROBESPIERRE, and the thirty-first of May, 1793, considered as the epoch of its introduction.

duction. Yet whoever examines attentively the situation and politics of France, from the subversion of the Monarchy, will be convinced that all the principles of this monstrous government were established during the administration of the Brissotins, and that the factions which succeeded, from Danton and Robespierre to Sieyes and Barras, have only developed them, and reduced them to practice. The revolution of the thirty-first of May, 1793, was not a contest for system but for power---that of July the twenty-eighth, 1794, (9th Thermidor,) was merely a struggle which of two parties should sacrifice the other---that of October the fifth, 1795, (13th Vendemiaire,) a war of the government against the people. But in all these convulsions, the primitive doctrines of tyranny and injustice were watched like the sacred fire, and have never for a moment been suffered to languish.

It may appear incredible to those who have not personally witnessed this phenomenon, that a government detested and despised by an immense majority of the nation,

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tion, should have been able not only to resist the efforts of so many powers combined against it, but even to proceed from defence to conquest, and to mingle surprize and terror with those sentiments of contempt and abhorrence which it originally excited.

That wisdom or talents are not the sources of this success, may be deduced from the situation of France itself. The armies of the republic have, indeed, invaded the territories of its enemies, but the desolation of their own country seems to increase with every triumph---the genius of the French government appears powerful only in destruction, and inventive only in oppression---and, while it is endowed with the faculty of spreading universal ruin, it is incapable of promoting the happiness of the smallest district under its protection. The unrestrained pillage of the conquered countries has not saved France from multiplied bankruptcies, nor her state-creditors from dying through want; and the French, in the midst of their external prosperity, are often distinguished from the people whom their armies have

have subjugated, only by a superior degree of wretchedness, and a more irregular despotism.

With a power excessive and unlimited, and surpassing what has hitherto been possessed by any Sovereign, it would be difficult to prove that these democratic despots have effected any thing either useful or beneficent. Whatever has the appearance of being so, will be found, on examination, to have for its object some purpose of individual interest or personal vanity. They *manage* the armies, they embellish Paris, they purchase the friendship of some states and the neutrality of others; but if there be any real patriots in France, how little do they appreciate these useless triumphs, these pilfered museums, and these fallacious negotiations, when they behold the population of their country diminished, its commerce annihilated, its wealth dissipated, its morals corrupted, and its liberty destroyed---

“ Thus, on deceitful Ætna’s flow’ry side

“ Unfading verdure glads the roving eye,

“ While

" While secret flames with unextinguish'd rage
" Insatiate on her wafed entrails prey,
" And melt her treach'rous beauties into ruin."

Those efforts which the partizans of republicanifm admire, and which even well-disposed persons regard as prodigies, are the fimple and natural refult of an unprincipled defpotifm, acting upon, and difpofing of, all the refources of a rich, populous, and enflaved nation. "*Il devient aifé d'être habile lorsqu'on s'est délivré des scrupules et des loix, de tout bonneur et de toute justice, des droits de fes semblables, et des devoirs de l'autorité---à ce degré d'indépendance, la plupart des obstacles qui modifient l'activité humaine difparaiffent; l'on parait avoir du talent lorsqu'on n'a que de l'impudence, et l'abus de la force paffe pour énergie.*" The operations of all other governments must, in a great meafure, be reftained by the will of the people, and by eftablifhed laws; with them, phyfical and political force are neceffarily feparate confiderations: they have not only to calculate what *can be borne*, but what *will be fubmitted to*; and perhaps France is the firft country that

that has been compelled to an exertion of its whole strength, without regard to any obstacle, natural, moral, or divine. It is for want of sufficiently investigating and allowing for this moral and political latitudinarianism of our enemies, that we are apt to be too precipitate in censuring the conduct of the war; and in our estimation of what has been done, we pay too little regard to the principles by which we have been directed. An honest man could scarcely imagine the means we have had to oppose, and an Englishman still less conceive that they would have been submitted to; for the same reason that the Romans had no law against parricide, till experience had evinced the *possibility* of the crime.

In a war like the present, advantage is not altogether to be appreciated by military superiority. If, as there is just ground for believing, our external hostilities have averted an internal revolution, what we have escaped is of infinitely more importance to us than what we could acquire. Commerce or conquest, compared to this, are secondary objects;

jects; and the preservation of our liberties and our constitution is a more solid blessing than the commerce of both the Indies, or the conquest of nations.

Should the following pages contribute to impress this salutary truth on my countrymen, my utmost ambition will be gratified; persuaded, that a sense of the miseries they have avoided, and of the happiness they enjoy, will be their best incentive, whether they may have to oppose the arms of the enemy in a continuance of the war, or their more dangerous machinations on the restoration of peace.

I cannot conclude without noticing my obligations to the Gentleman whose name is prefixed to these volumes; and I think it at the same time incumbent on me to avow, that in having assisted the author, he must not be considered as sanctioning the literary imperfections of the work. When the subject was first mentioned to him, he did me the justice of supposing, that I was not likely to have written any thing, the general tendency of
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of which he might disapprove; and when, on perusing the manuscript, he found it contain sentiments dissimilar to his own, he was too liberal to require a sacrifice of them as the condition of his services.---I confess that, previous to my arrival in France in 1792, I entertained opinions somewhat more favourable to the *principle* of the revolution than those which I was led to adopt at a subsequent period. Accustomed to regard with great justice the British constitution as the standard of known political excellence, I hardly conceived it possible that freedom or happiness could exist under any other; and I am not singular in having suffered this prepossession to invalidate even the evidence of my senses. I was, therefore, naturally partial to whatever professed to approach the object of my veneration. I forgot that governments are not to be founded on imitations or theories, and that they are perfect only as adapted to the genius, manners, and disposition of the people who are subject to them. Experience and maturer judgement have corrected my error, and I am perfectly convinced, that the old monarchical constitution

tution of France, with very slight meliorations, was every way better calculated for the national character than a more popular form of government.

A critic, though not very severe, will discover many faults of style, even where the matter may not be exceptionable. Besides my other deficiencies, the habit of writing is not easily supplied, and, as I despaired of attaining excellence, and was not solicitous about degrees of mediocrity, I determined on conveying to the public such information as I was possessed of, without alteration or ornament. Most of these Letters were written exactly in the situations they describe, and remain in their original state; the rest were arranged according as opportunities were favourable, from notes and diaries kept when "the times were hot and feverish," and when it would have been dangerous to attempt more method. I forbear to describe how they were concealed either in France or at my departure, because I might give rise to the persecution and oppression of others. But, that I may not attri-

bute to myself courage which I do not possess, nor create doubts of my veracity, I must observe, that I seldom ventured to write till I was assured of some certain means of conveying my papers to a person who could safely dispose of them.

As a considerable period has elapsed since my return, it may not be improper to add, that I took some steps for the publication of these Letters so early as July, 1795. Certain difficulties, however, arising, of which I was not aware, I relinquished my design, and should not have been tempted to resume it, but for the kindness of the Gentleman whose name appears as the Editor.

Sept. 12, 1796.

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RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

May, 1792.

I Am every day more confirmed in the opinion I communicated to you on my arrival, that the first ardour of the revolution is abated.—The bridal days are indeed past, and I think I perceive something like indifference approaching. Perhaps the French themselves are not sensible of this change; but I who have been absent two years, and have made as it were a sudden transition from enthusiasm to coldness, without passing through the intermediate gradations, am forcibly struck with it. When I was here in 1790, parties could be scarcely said to exist—the popular triumph was too complete and too recent for intolerance and persecution, and the Noblesse and Clergy either submitted in silence, or appeared to rejoice in their own defeat. In fact, it was the confusion of a decisive conquest—the victors and the vanquished were mingled together; and the one had not leisure

to exercise cruelty, nor the other to meditate revenge.—Politics had not yet divided society; nor the weakness and pride of the great, nor the malice and insolence of the little, thinned the public places. The politics of the women went no farther than a few couplets in praise of liberty, and the patriotism of the men was confined to an *habit de garde nationale*, the device of a button, or a nocturnal revel, which they called mounting guard.—Money was yet plenty, at least silver, (for the gold had already begun to disappear,) commerce in its usual train, and, in short, to one who observes no deeper than myself, every thing seemed gay and flourishing—the people were persuaded they were happier; and, amidst such an appearance of content, one must have been a cold politician to have examined too strictly into the future. But all this, my good brother, is in a great measure subsided; and the disparity is so evident, that I almost imagine myself one of the seven sleepers—and like them too the coin I offer is become rare, and regarded more as medals than money. The playful distinctions of Aristocrate and Democrate are degenerated into the opprobrium and bitterness of Party—political dissensions pervade and chill the common intercourse of life—the people are become
gross

gross and arbitrary, and the higher classes (from a pride which those who consider the frailty of human nature will allow for) desert the public amusements, where they cannot appear but at the risk of being the marked objects of insult.—The politics of the women are no longer innoxious—their political principles form the leading trait of their characters; and as you know we are often apt to supply by zeal what we want in power, the ladies are far from being the most tolerant partizans on either side.—The national uniform, which contributed so much to the success of the revolution, and stimulated the patriotism of the young men, is become general; and the task of mounting guard, to which it subjects the wearer, is now a serious and troublesome duty.—To finish my observations, and my contrast, no *specie* whatever is to be seen; and the people, if they still idolize their new form of government, do it at present with great sobriety—the *vive la nation!* seems now rather the effect of habit than of feeling; and one seldom hears any thing like the spontaneous and enthusiastic sounds I formerly remarked.

I have not yet been here long enough to discover the causes of this change; perhaps they may lie too deep for such an observer as myself:

but if (as the causes of important effects sometimes do) they lie on the surface, they will be less liable to escape *me*, than an observer of more pretensions. Whatever my remarks are, I will not fail to communicate them—the employment will at least be agreeable to *me*, though the result should not be satisfactory to *you*; and as I shall never venture on any reflection, without relating the occurrence that gave rise to it, your own judgement will enable you to correct the errors of mine.

I was present yesterday at a funeral service, performed in honour of General Dillon. These kind of services are common in Catholic countries, and consist in erecting a cenotaph, ornamented with numerous lights, flowers, crosses, &c. The church is hung with black, and the mass is performed the same as if the body were present. On account of General Dillon's profession, the mass yesterday was a military one. It must always, I imagine, sound strange to the ears of a Protestant, to hear nothing but theatrical music on these occasions, and indeed I could never reconcile myself to it; for if we allow any effect to music at all, the train of thought which should inspire us with respect for the dead, and reflections on mortality,

mortality, is not likely to be produced by the strains in which Dido bewails Eneas, or in which Armida assails the virtue of Rinaldo.— I fear, that in general the air of an opera reminds the belle of the Theatre where she heard it—and, by a natural transition, of the beau who attended her, and the dress of herself and her neighbours. I confess, this was nearly my own case yesterday, on hearing an air from “Sargines;” and had not the funeral oration reminded me, I should have forgotten the unfortunate event we were celebrating, and which, for some days before, when undistracted by this pious ceremony, I had dwelt on with pity and horror.*—Independent of any regret for the

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fate

* At the first skirmish between the French and Austrians near Lisle, a general panic seized the former, and they retreated in disorder to Lisle, crying “*saue qui peut, & nous sommes trabis.*” The General, after in vain endeavouring to rally them, was massacred at his return on the great square.—My pen falters, and refuses to describe the barbarities committed on the lifeless hero. Let it suffice, perhaps more than suffice, to say, that his mutilated remains were thrown on a fire, which these savages danced round, with yells expressive of their execrable festivity. A young Englishman, who was so unfortunate as to be near the spot, was compelled to join in this outrage to humanity.—The same day a gentleman, the intimate friend of our acquaintance, Mad. ———, was walking (unconscious what had happened) without the gate which

fate of Dillon, who is said to have been a brave and good officer, I am sorry that the first event of this war should be marked by cruelty and licentiousness.—Military discipline has been much relaxed since the revolution, and from the length of time since the French have been engaged in a land war, many of the troops must be without that kind of courage which is the effect of habit. The danger, therefore, of suffering them to alledge that they are betrayed, whenever they do not choose to fight, and to excuse their own cowardice by ascribing treachery to their leaders, is incalculable.—Above all, every infraction of the laws in a country just supposing itself become free, cannot be too severely repressed. The National Assembly have done all that humanity could suggest—they have ordered the punishment of the assassins, and have pensioned and adopted the General's children. The orator expatiated both on the horror of the act and its consequences, as I should have thought, with some ingenuity, had I not been assured by a *brother orator* that the whole was “ execrable.” But I frequently remark, that though a Frenchman may suppose which leads to Douay, and was met by the flying ruffians on their return; immediately on seeing him they shouted “ voila encore un Aristocrate !” and massacred him on the spot.

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the merit of his countrymen to be collectively superior to that of the whole world, he seldom allows any individual of them to have so large a portion as himself.—Adieu: I have already written enough to convince you I have neither acquired the Gallomania, nor forgotten my friends in England; and I conclude with a wish à propos to my subject—that they may long enjoy the rational liberty they possess and so well deserve. Yours.

May.

YOU, my dear —, who live in a land of pounds, shillings, and pence, can scarcely form an idea of our embarrassments through the want of them. 'Tis true, these are petty evils; but when you consider that they happen every day, and every hour, and that, if they are not very serious, they are very frequent, you will rejoice in the splendour of your national credit, which procures you all the accommodation of paper currency, without diminishing the circulation of specie. Our only currency here is assignats of 5 livres, 50, 100, 200, and upwards: therefore in making purchases, you must accommodate your wants to the value of

your assignat, or *you* must owe the shopkeeper, or the shopkeeper must owe *you*; and, in short, as an old woman assured me to-day, "*c'est de quoi faire perdre la tête*," and, if it lasted long, it would be the death of her. Within these few days, however, the municipalities have attempted to remedy the inconvenience, by creating small paper of five, ten, fifteen, and twenty sols, which they give in exchange for assignats of five livres; but the number they are allowed to issue is limited, and the demand for them so great, that the accommodation is inadequate to the difficulty of procuring it. On the days on which this paper (which is called *billets de confiance*) is issued, the Hotel de Ville is besieged by a host of women collected from all parts of the district—Payfannes, small shopkeepers, servant maids, and though last, not least formidable—fishwomen. They usually take their stand two or three hours before the time of delivery, and the interval is employed in discussing the news, and execrating paper money. But when once the door is opened, a scene takes place which bids defiance to language, and calls for the pencil of a Hogarth. Babel was, I dare say, comparatively to this, a place of retreat and silence. Clamours, revilings, contentions, tearing of hair, and breaking of heads, generally conclude

conclude the business; and after the loss of half a day's time, some part of their clothes, and the expence of a few bruises, the combatants retire with small bills to the value of five, or perhaps ten livres, as the whole resource to carry on their little commerce for the ensuing week. I doubt not but the paper may have had some share in alienating the minds of the people from the revolution. Whenever I want to purchase any thing, the vender usually answers my question by another, and with a rueful kind of tone enquires, "en papier, madame?"—and the bargain concludes with a melancholy reflection on the hardness of the times.

The decrees relative to the priests have likewise occasioned much dissension; and it seems to me impolitic thus to have made religion the standard of party. The high mass, which is celebrated by a priest who has taken the oaths, is frequented by a numerous, but, it must be confessed, an ill-drest and ill-scented congregation; while the low mass, which is later, and which is allowed the nonjuring clergy, has a gayer audience, but is much less crowded.—By the way, I believe many who formerly did not much disturb themselves about religious tenets, have become rigid Papists since an adherence

herence to the holy see has become a criterion of political opinion. But if these separatists are bigoted and obstinate, the conventionalists on their side are ignorant and intolerant.

I enquired my way to-day to the Rue de l'Hôpital. The woman I spoke to asked me, in a menacing tone, what I wanted there. I replied, which was true, that I merely wanted to pass through the street as my nearest way home; upon which she lowered her voice, and conducted me very civilly.—I mentioned the circumstance on my return, and found that the nuns of the hospital had their mass performed by a priest who had not taken the oaths, and that those who were suspected of going to attend it were insulted, and sometimes ill treated. A poor woman, some little time ago, who conceived perhaps that her salvation might depend on exercising her religion in the way she had been accustomed to, persisted in going, and was used by the populace with such a mixture of barbarity and indecency, that her life was despaired of. Yet this is the age and the country of *Philosophers*.—Perhaps you will begin to think Swift's fables, who only amused themselves with endeavouring to propagate sheep without wool, not so contemptible. I am almost convinced

vinced myself, that when a man once piques himself on being a *philosopher*, if he does no mischief you ought to be satisfied with him.

We passed last Sunday with Mr. de —'s tenants in the country. Nothing can equal the avidity of these people for news. We sat down after dinner under some trees in the village, and Mr. de — began reading the Gazette to the farmers who were about us. In a few minutes every thing that *could bear* (for I leave *understanding* the pedantry of a French newspaper out of the question) were his auditors. A party at quoits in one field, and a dancing party in another, quitted their amusements, and listened with undivided attention. I believe in general the farmers are the people most contented with the revolution, and indeed they have reason to be so; for at present they refuse to sell their corn unless for money, while they pay their rent in assignats; and farms being for the most part on leases, the objections of the landlord to this kind of payment are of no avail. Great encouragement is likewise held out to them to purchase national property, which I am informed they do to an extent that may for some time be injurious to agriculture; for in their eagerness to acquire land, they deprive

prive themselves of the means of cultivating it. They do not, like our crusading ancestors, "sell the pasture to buy the horse," but the horse to buy the pasture; so that we may expect to see in many places large farms in the hands of those who are obliged to neglect them.

A great change has happened within the last year, with regard to landed property—so much has been sold, that many farmers have had the opportunity of becoming proprietors. The rage of emigration, which the approach of war, pride, timidity, and vanity are daily increasing, has occasioned many of the Noblesse to sell their estates, which, with those of the Crown and the Clergy, form a large mass of property, thrown as it were into general circulation. This may in future be beneficial to the country, but the present generation will perhaps have to purchase (and not cheaply) advantages they cannot enjoy. A philanthropist may not think of this with regret; and yet I know not why one race is preferable to another, or why an evil should be endured by those who exist *now*, in order that those who *succeed* may be free from it.—I would willingly plant a million of acorns, that another age might be supplied with oaks; but I confess

confess, I do not think it quite so pleasant for us to want bread, in order that our descendants may have a superfluity.

I am half ashamed of these selfish arguments; but really I have been led to them through mere apprehension of what I fear the people may have yet to endure, in consequence of the revolution.

I have frequently observed how little taste the French have for the country, and I believe all my companions except Mr. de —, who took (as one always does) an interest in surveying his property, were heartily *ennuyés* with our little excursion.—Mad. de —, on her arrival, took her post by the farmer's fire-side, and was out of humour the whole day, inasmuch as our fare was homely, and there was nothing but rustics to see or be seen by. That a plain dinner should be a serious affair, you may not wonder; but the last cause of distress, perhaps you will not conclude quite so natural at her years. All that can be said about it is, that she is a French woman, who rouges, and wears lilac ribbons, at seventy-four.—I hope, in my zeal to obey you, my reflections will not be

too

too voluminous.—For the present I will be warned by my conscience, and add only, that I am, Yours.

June 10.

YOU observe, with some surprize, that I make no mention of the Jacobins—the fact is, that until now I have heard very little about them. Your English partizans of the revolution have, by publishing their correspondence with these societies, attributed a consequence to them infinitely beyond what they have had pretensions to:—a prophet, it is said, is not honoured in his own country—I am sure a Jacobin is not. In provincial towns these clubs are generally composed of a few of the lowest tradesmen, who have so disinterested a patriotism, as to bestow more attention on the state than on their own shops; and as a man may be an excellent patriot without the aristocratic talents of reading and writing, they usually provide a secretary or president, who can supply these deficiencies—a country attorney, a *Père de l'oratoire*, or a disbanded capuchin, are in most places the candidates for this office. The clubs often assemble only to read the newspapers;

newspapers; but where they are sufficiently in force, they make motions for "*fêtes*," censure the municipalities, and endeavour to influence the elections of the members who compose them.—That of Paris is supposed to consist of about six thousand members; but I am told their number and influence is daily increasing, and that the National Assembly is more subservient to them than it is willing to acknowledge—yet, I believe, the people at large are equally adverse to the Jacobins, who are said to entertain the chimerical project of forming a republic, and to the Aristocrates, who wish to restore the ancient government. The party in opposition to both these, who are called the Feuillans,* have the real voice of the people, and knowing this, they employ less art than their opponents, have no point of union, and perhaps may finally be undermined by intrigue, or even subdued by violence.

You seem not to comprehend why I include vanity among the causes of emigration, and yet I assure you it has had no small share in many of them. The gentry of the provinces,

* They derive this appellation, as the Jacobins do theirs, from the convent at which they hold their meetings.

by thus imitating the higher noblesse, imagine they have formed a kind of a common cause, which may hereafter tend to equalize the difference of ranks, and associate them with those they have been accustomed to look up to as their superiors. It is a kind of *ton* among the women, particularly to talk of their emigrated relations, with an accent more expressive of pride than regret, and which seems to lay claim to distinction rather than pity.

I must now leave you to contemplate the boasted misfortunes of these belles, that I may join the card party which is their alleviation.—
Adieu.

June 24.

YOU have doubtless learned from the public papers the late outrage of the Jacobins, in order to force the King to consent to the formation of an army at Paris, and to sign the decree for banishing the nonjuring clergy. The newspapers will describe to you the procession of the Sans Culottes, the indecency of their banners, and the disorders which were the result—but it is impossible for either them or me to convey an idea of

of the general indignation excited by these atrocities. Every well-meaning person is grieved for the present, and apprehensive for the future: and I am not without hope, that this open avowal of the designs of the *Jacobins*, will unite the *Constitutionalists* and *Aristocrats*, and that they will join their efforts in defence of the Crown, as the only means of saving both from being overwhelmed by a faction, who are now become too daring to be despised. Many of the municipalities and departments are preparing to address the King, on the fortitude he displayed in this hour of insult and peril.— I know not why, but the people have been taught to entertain a mean opinion of his personal courage; and the late violence will at least have the good effect of undeceiving them. It is certain, that he behaved on this occasion with the utmost coolness; and the *Garde Nationale*, whose hand he placed on his heart, attested that it had no unusual palpitation.

That the King should be unwilling to sanction the raising of an army under the immediate auspice of the avowed enemies of himself, and of the constitution he has sworn to protect, cannot be much wondered at; and those who know the Catholic religion, and con-

sider that this Prince is devout, and that he has reason to suspect the fidelity of all who approach him, will wonder still less that he refuses to banish a class of men, whose influence is extensive, and whose interest it is to preserve their attachment to him.

These events have thrown a gloom over private societies; and public amusements, as I observed in a former letter, are little frequented: so that, on the whole, time passes heavily with a people who, generally speaking, have few resources in themselves. Before the revolution, France was at this season a scene of much gaiety. Every village had alternately a sort of *Fête*, which nearly answers to our *Wake*—but with this difference, that it was numerously attended by all ranks, and the amusement was dancing instead of wrestling and drinking. Several small fields, or different parts of a large one, were provided with music, distinguished by flags, and appropriated to the several classes of dancers—one for the peasants, another for the bourgeois, and a third for the higher orders. The young people danced beneath the ardour of a July sun, while the old looked on and regaled themselves with beer, cyder, and gingerbread. I was always much pleased with
this

this village festivity : it gratified my mind more than select and expensive amusements, because it was general, and within the power of all who chose to partake of it ; and the little distinction of rank which was preserved, far from diminishing the pleasure of any, added, I am certain, to the freedom of all. By mixing with those only of her own class, the *Paysanne** was spared the temptation of envying the pink ribbons of the *Bourgeoise*, who in her turn was not disturbed by an immediate rivalry with the sash and plumes of the provincial belle. But this custom is now much on the decline. The young women avoid occasions where an inebriated soldier may offer himself as her partner in the dance, and her refusal be attended with insult to herself, and danger to those who protect her ; and as this licence is nearly as offensive to the decent *Bourgeoise* as to the female of higher condition, this sort of *fête* will most probably be entirely abandoned.

The people here all dance much better than

* The head-dress of the French *Paysanne* is uniformly a small cap, without ribbon or ornament of any kind, except in that part of Normandy which is called the *Pays de Caux*, where the *Paysannes* wear a particular kind of head dress, ornamented with silver.

those of the same rank in *England*; but this national accomplishment is not instinctive: for though few of the laborious class have been taught to read, there are scarcely any so poor as not to bestow three livres for a quarter's instruction from a dancing master; and with this three months noviciate they become qualified to dance through the rest of their lives.

The rage for emigration, and the approach of the Austrians have occasioned many restrictions on travelling, especially near the sea-coast or frontiers. No person can pass through a town without a passport from the municipality he resides in, specifying his age, the place of his birth, his destination, the height of his person, and the features of his face. The Marquis de C—— entered the town yesterday, and at the gate presented his passport as usual: the guard looked at the passport, and in a high tone demanded his name, whence he came, and where he was going. M. de C—— referred him to the passport, and suspecting the man could not read, persisted in refusing to give a verbal account of himself, but with much civility pressed the perusal of the passport; adding, that if it was informal, Monsieur might write to the municipality that granted it. The man,

man, however, did not approve of the jest, and took the Marquis before the municipality, who sentenced him to a month's imprisonment for his pleasantry.

The French are becoming very grave, and a *bon-mot* will not now, as formerly, save a man's life.—I do not remember to have seen in any English print an anecdote on this subject, which at once marks the levity of the Parisians, and the wit and presence of mind of the Abbé Maury.—At the beginning of the revolution, when the people were very much incensed against the Abbé, he was one day, on quitting the Assembly, surrounded by an enraged mob, who seized on him, and were hurrying him away to execution, amidst the universal cry of *à la lanterne! à la lanterne!* The Abbé, with much coolness and good humour, turned to those nearest him, “*Eh bien mes amis et quand je serois à la lanterne, en verriez vous plus clair?*” Those who held him were disarmed, the *bon-mot* flew through the croud, and the Abbé escaped while they were applauding it.—I have nothing to offer after this trait which is worthy of succeeding it, but will add that I am always Yours.

July 24.

OUR revolution-æra has passed tranquilly in the provinces, and with less turbulence at Paris than was expected. I consign to the Gazette-writers those long descriptions that describe nothing, and leave the mind as unsatisfied as the eye. I content myself with observing only, that the ceremony here was gay, impressive, and animating. I indeed have often remarked, that the works of nature are better described than those of art. The scenes of nature, though varied, are uniform; while the productions of art are subject to the caprices of whim, and the vicissitudes of taste. A rock, a wood, or a valley, however the scenery may be diversified, always conveys a perfect and distinct image to the mind; but a temple, an altar, a palace, or a pavilion, requires a detail, minute even to tediousness, which, after all, gives but an imperfect notion of the object. I have as often read descriptions of the Vatican, as of the Bay of Naples; yet I recollect little of the former, while the latter seems almost familiar to me.—Many are strongly impressed with the scenery of Milton's Paradise, who have but confused ideas of the splendour of Pandemonium.

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The descriptions, however, are equally minute, and the poetry of both is beautiful.

But to return to this country, which is not absolutely a Paradise, and I hope will not become a Pandemonium—the ceremony I have been alluding to, though really interesting, is by no means to be considered as a proof that the ardour for liberty increases: on the contrary, in proportion as these *fêtes* become more frequent, the enthusiasm which they excite seems to diminish. “For ever mark, Lucilius, when Love begins to sicken and decline, it useth an enforced ceremony.” When there were no federations, the people were more united. The planting trees of liberty seems to have damped the spirit of freedom; and since there has been a decree for wearing the national colours, they are more the marks of obedience than proofs of affection.—I cannot pretend to decide whether the leaders of the people find their followers less warm than they were, and think it necessary to stimulate them by these shows, or whether the shows themselves, by too frequent repetition, have rendered the people indifferent about the objects of them.—Perhaps both these suppositions are true. The French are volatile and material; they are not very capable of attach-

ment to principles. External objects are requisite for them, even in a slight degree; and the momentary enthusiasm that is obtained by affecting their senses subsides with the conclusion of a favourite air, or the end of a gaudy procession.

The Jacobin party are daily gaining ground; and since they have forced a ministry of their own on the King, their triumph has become still more insolent and decisive.—A storm is said to be hovering over us, which I think of with dread, and cannot communicate with safety—"Heaven square the trial of those who are implicated, to their proportioned strength!"
—Adieu.

August 4.

I Must repeat to you, that I have no talent for description; and, having seldom been able to profit by the descriptions of others, I am modest enough not willingly to attempt one myself. But, as you observe, the ceremony of a foederation, though familiar to *me*, is not so to my English friends; I therefore obey your commands, though certain of not succeeding so as
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to gratify your curiosity in the manner you too partially expect.

The temple where the ceremony was performed, was erected in an open space, well chosen both for convenience and effect. In a large circle on this spot, twelve posts, between fifty and sixty feet high, were placed at equal distances, except one larger, opening in front by way of entrance. On each alternate post were fastened ivy, laurel, &c. so as to form a thick body which entirely hid the support. These greens were then shorn (in the manner you see in old fashioned gardens) into the form of Doric columns, of dimensions proportioned to their height. The intervening posts were covered with white cloth, which was so artificially folded, as exactly to resemble fluted pillars—from the bases of which ascended spiral wreaths of flowers. The whole was connected at top by a bold festoon of foliage, and the capital of each column was surmounted by a vase of white lilies. In the middle of this temple was placed an altar, hung round with lilies, and on it was deposited the book of the constitution. The approach to the altar was by a large flight of steps, covered with beautiful tapestry.

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All this having been arranged and decorated, (a work of several days,) the important æra was ushered in by the firing of cannon, ringing of bells, and an appearance of bustle and hilarity not to be seen on any other occasion. About ten, the members of the district, the municipality, and the judges in their habits of ceremony, met at the great church, and from thence proceeded to the altar of liberty. The troops of the line, the *Garde Nationale* of the town, and of all the surrounding communes, then arrived, with each their respective music and colours, which (reserving one only of the latter to distinguish them in the ranks) they planted round the altar. This done, they retired, and, forming a circle round the temple, left a large intermediate space free. A mass was then celebrated with the most perfect order and decency, and at the conclusion were read the rights of man and the constitution. The troops, *Garde Nationale*, &c. were then addressed by their respective officers, the oath to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the King, was administered; every sword was drawn, and every hat waved in the air; while all the bands of music joined in the favourite strain of *ça ira*.— This was followed by crowning, with the civic wreaths hung round the altar, a number of people,

people, who during the year had been instrumental in saving the lives of their fellow-citizens that had been endangered by drowning or other accidents. This honorary reward was accompanied by a pecuniary one, and a fraternal embrace from all the constituted bodies. But this was not the gravest part of the ceremony. The magistrates, however upright, were not all graceful, and the people, though they understood the value of the *money*, did not that of the *civic wreaths*, or the *embraces*; they therefore looked vacant enough during this part of the business, and grinned most facetiously when they began to examine the appearance of each other in their oaken crowns, and, I dare say, thought the whole comical enough.—This is one trait of national pedantry. Because the Romans awarded a civic wreath for an act of humanity, the French have adopted the custom; and decorate thus a soldier or a sailor, who never heard of the Romans in his life, except in extracts from the New Testament at mass.

But to return to our *fête*, of which I have only to add, that the magistrates departed in the order they observed in coming, and the troops and *Garde Nationale* filed off with their hats in the air, and with universal acclamations, to the sound

found of *ça ira*.—Things of this kind are not susceptible of description. The detail may be uninteresting, while the general effect may have been impressive. The spirit of the scene I have been endeavouring to recall seems to have evaporated under my pen; yet to the spectator it was gay, elegant, and imposing. The day was fine, a brilliant sun glittered on the banners, and a gentle breeze gave them motion; while the satisfied countenances of the people added spirit and animation to the whole.

I must remark to you, that *devots*, and determined aristocrats, never attend on these occasions. The piety of the one is shocked at a mass by a priest who has taken the oaths, and the pride of the other is not yet reconciled to confusion of ranks and popular festivities. I asked a woman who brings us fruit every day, why she had not come on the fourteenth as usual. She told me she did not come to the town, “*à cause de la fédération—vous êtes aristocrate donc?—Ah, mon Dieu non—ce n’est pas que je suis aristocrate, ou démocrate, mais que je suis Chrétienne.*” This is an instance, among many others I could produce, that our legislators have been wrong, in connecting any change of the national religion with the revolution. I am
every

every day convinced, that this and the assignats are the great causes of the alienation visible in many who were once the warmest patriots.—

Adieu: do not envy us our *fêtes* and ceremonies, while you enjoy a constitution which requires no oath to make you cherish it; and a national liberty, which is felt and valued without the aid of extrinsic decoration.—Yours.

August 15.

THE consternation and horror of which I have been partaker, will more than apologize for my silence. It is impossible for any one, however unconnected with the country, not to feel an interest in its present calamities, and to regret them. I have little courage to write even now, and you must pardon me if my letter should bear marks of the general depression. All but the faction are grieved and indignant at the King's deposition; but this grief is without energy, and this indignation silent. The partizans of the old government, and the friends of the new, are equally enraged; but they have no union, are suspicious of each other, and are sinking under the stupor of despair, when they should be preparing for revenge.—It would not be

be easy to describe our situation during the last week. The ineffectual efforts of La Fayette, and the violences occasioned by them, had prepared us for something still more serious. On the ninth, we had a letter from one of the representatives for this department, strongly expressive of his apprehensions for the morrow, but promising to write if he survived it. The day, on which we expected news, came, but no post, no papers, no diligence, nor any means of information. The succeeding night we sat up, expecting letters by the post: still, however, none arrived; and the courier only passed hastily through, giving no detail, but that Paris was *à feu et à sang*. At length, after passing two days and nights in this dreadful suspense, we received certain intelligence which even exceeded our fears.—It is needless to repeat the horrors that have been perpetrated. The accounts must, ere now, have reached you. Our representative, as he seemed to expect, was so ill treated as to be unable to write: he was one of those who had voted the approval of La Fayette's conduct—all of whom were either massacred, wounded, or intimidated; and, by this means, a majority was procured to vote the deposition of the King. The party allow, by their own accounts, eight thousand persons to have

have perished on this occasion ; but the number is supposed to be much more considerable. No papers are published at present except those whose editors, being members of the Assembly, and either agents or instigators of the massacres, are, of course, interested in concealing or palliating them.—Mr. de — has just now taken up one of these atrocious journals, and exclaims, with tears starting from his eyes, “ *on a abattu la statue d’Henri quatre !*” The sacking of Rome by the Goths offers no picture equal to the licentiousness and barbarity committed in a country which calls itself the most enlightened in Europe.—But, instead of recording these horrors, I will fill up my paper with the Chœur Bearnais.* It was published sometime ago in a periodical

* CHŒUR BEARNAIS.

- “ Un troubadour Bearnais,
- “ Les yeux inondés de larmes,
- “ A’ ses montagnards
- “ Chantoit ce refrain source d’alarmes—
- “ Louis le fils d’Henri
- “ Est prisonnier dans Paris !
- “ Il a tremblé pour les jours
- “ De sa compagne chérie
- “ Qui n’a trouvé de secours
- “ Que dans sa propre énergie ;
- “ Elle suit le fils d’Henri
- “ Dans les prisons de Paris.

“ Quel

periodical work, (written with great spirit and talents,) called "The Acts of the Apostles," and,

" Quel crime ont ils donc commis

" Pour être enchainés de même ?

" Du peuple ils sont les amis,

" Le peuple veut il qu'on l'aime,

" Quand il met le fils d'Henri

" Dans les prisons de Paris ?

" Le Dauphin, ce fils chéri,

" Qui seul fait notre esperance,

" De pleurs sera donc nourri ;

" Les Berceaux qu'on donne en France

" Aux enfans de notre Henri

" Sont les prisons de Paris.

" Il a vu couler le sang

" De ce garde fidèle,

" Qui vient d'offrir en mourant

" Aux Français un beau modèle ;

" Mais Louis le fils d'Henri

" Est prisonnier dans Paris.

" Il n'est si triste appareil

" Qui du respect nous dégage,

" Les feux ardens du Soleil

" Savent percer le nuage :

" Le prisonnier de Paris

" Est toujours le fils d'Henri.

" Français, trop ingrats Français

" Rendez le Roi à sa compagne,

" C'est le bien du Bearnais,

" C'est l'enfant de la Montagne :

" Le

and, I believe, has not yet appeared in England. The situation of the King gives a peculiar interest to these stanzas, which, merely as a poetical composition, are very beautiful. I have often attempted to translate them, but have always found it impossible to preserve the effect and simplicity of the original. They are set to a little plaintive air, very happily characteristic of the words.

Perhaps I shall not write to you again from hence, as we depart for A—— on Tuesday next. A change of scene will dissipate a little the seriousness we have contracted during the late

“ Le bonheur qu' avoit Henri

“ Nous l'assurons à Louis.

“ Chez vous l'homme a de ses droits

“ Récouvré le noble usage,

“ Et vous opprimez vos rois,

“ Ah ! quel injuste partage !

“ Le peuple est libre, et Louis

“ Est prisonnier dans Paris.

“ Au pied de ce monument

“ Ou le bon Henri respire

“ Pourquoi l'airain foudroyant ?

“ Ah l'on veut qu' Henri conspire

“ Lui même contre son fils

“ Dans les prisons de Paris.”

events. If I were determined to indulge grief or melancholy, I would never remove from the spot where I had formed the resolution. Man is a proud animal even when oppressed by misfortune. He seeks for his tranquillity in reason and reflection; whereas, a post-chaise and four, or even a hard-trotting horse, is worth all the philosophy in the world.—But if, as I observed before, one is determined against consolation, one cannot do better than stay at home, and reason and philosophize.

Adieu:—the situation of my friends in this country makes me think of England with pleasure and respect; and I shall conclude with a very homely couplet, which, after all the fashionable liberality of modern travellers, contains a great deal of truth:

“ Amongst mankind

“ We ne’er shall find

“ The worth we left at home.”

Yours, &c.

August 22.

THE hour is past, in which, if the King's friends had exerted themselves, they might have procured a movement in his favour. The people were at first amazed, then grieved; but the national philosophy already begins to operate, and they will sink into indifference, till again awakened by some new calamity. The leaders of the faction do not, however, entirely depend either on the supineness of their adversaries, or the submission of the people. Money is distributed amongst the idle and indigent, and agents are nightly employed in the public houses to comment on newspapers, written for the purpose to blacken the King and exalt the patriotism of the party who have dethroned him. Much use has likewise been made of the advances of the Prussians towards Champagne, and the usual mummary of ceremony has not been wanting. Robespierre, in a burst of extemporary energy, *previously* studied, has declared the country in danger. The declaration has been echoed by all the departments, and proclaimed to the people with much solemnity. We were not behind hand in the ceremonial of the business, though, somehow, the effect was not so serious and imposing as one could have

wished on such an occasion. A smart flag, with the words "Citizens, the country is in danger," was prepared; the judges and the municipality were in their costume, the troops and *Garde Nationale* under arms, and an orator, surrounded by this *cortege*, harangued in the principal parts of the town on the text of the banner which waved before him.

All this was very well; but, unfortunately, in order to distinguish the orator amidst the croud, it was determined he should harangue on horseback.—Now here arose a difficulty which all the ardour of patriotism was not able to surmount. The French are in general but indifferent equestrians; and it so happened that, in our municipality, those who could speak could not ride, and those who could ride could not speak. At length, however, after much debating, it was determined that arms should yield to the gown, or, rather, the horse to the orator—with this precaution, that the *monture* should be properly secured, by an attendant to hold the bridle. Under this safeguard, the rhetorician issued forth, and the first part of the speech was performed without accident; but when, by way of relieving the declaimer, the whole military band began to flourish *ça ira*,
the

the horse, even more patriotic than his rider, curvetted and twisted with so much animation, that however the spectators might be delighted, the orator was far from participating in their satisfaction. After all this, the speech was to be finished, and the silence of the music did not immediately tranquilize the animal. The orator's eye wandered from the paper that contained his speech, with wistful glances towards the mane; the fervor of his indignation against the Austrians was frequently calmed by the involuntary friskings he was obliged to submit to; and at the very crisis of the emphatic declaration, he seemed much less occupied by his country's danger than his own.—The people, who were highly amused, I dare say, conceived the whole ceremony to be a rejoicing, and at every repetition that the country was in danger, joined with great glee in the chorus of *ça ira*.* Many of the spectators, I believe, had for some time been convinced of the danger that threatened the country, and did not suppose it

* The oration consisted of several parts, each ending with a kind of burden of "Citoyens la patrie est en danger;" and the arrangers of the ceremony had not selected appropriate music: so that the band, who had been accustomed to play nothing else on public occasions, struck up *ça ira* at every declaration that the country was in danger!

much increased by the events of the war; others were pleased with a show, without troubling themselves about the occasion of it; and the mass, except when roused to attention by their favourite air, or the exhibitions of the equestrian orator, looked on with vacant stupidity.— This tremendous flag is now suspended from a window of the Hotel de Ville, where it is to remain until the inscription it wears shall no longer be true; and I heartily wish, the distresses of the country may not be more durable than the texture on which they are proclaimed.

Our journey is fixed for to-morrow, and all the morning has been passed in attendance for our passports.—This affair is not so quickly dispatched as you may imagine. The French are, indeed, said to be a very lively people, but we mistake their volubility for vivacity; for in their public offices, their shops, and in any transaction of business, no people on earth can be more tedious—they are slow, irregular, and loquacious; and a retail English Quaker, with all his formalities, would dispose of half his stock in less time than you can purchase a three sols stamp from a brisk French Commis. You may therefore conceive, that this official portraiture

traiture of so many females was a work of time, and not very pleasant to the originals. The delicacy of an Englishman may be shocked at the idea of examining and registering a lady's features one after another, like the articles of a bill of lading; but the cold and systematic gallantry of a Frenchman is not so scrupulous.— The officer, however, who is employed for this purpose here, is civil, and I suspected the infinity of my nose, and the acuteness of Mad. de ——'s chin, might have disconcerted him; but he extricated himself very decently. My nose is enrolled in the order of aquilines, and the old lady's chin pared off to a "*menton un peu pointu.*"

The carriages are ordered for seven to-morrow. Recollect, that seven females, with all their appointments, are to occupy them, and then calculate the hour I shall begin increasing my distance from England and my friends. I shall not do it without regret; yet perhaps you will be less inclined to pity me than the unfortunate wights who are to escort us. A journey of an hundred miles, with French horses, French carriages, French harness, and such an unreasonable female charge, is, I confess, in great humility, not to be ventured on with-

out a most determined patience.—I shall write to you on our arrival at Arras; and am, till then, at all times, and in all places, Yours.

Heſdin.

WE arrived here laſt night, notwithstanding the difficulties of our firſt ſetting out, in tolerable time; but I have gained ſo little in point of reſt, that I might as well have continued my journey. We are lodged at an inn which, though large and the beſt in the town, is ſo diſguſtingly filthy, that I could not determine to undreſs myſelf, and am now up and ſcribbling, till my companions ſhall be ready. Our embarkation will, I foreſee, be a work of time and labour; for my friend, Mad. de —, beſides the uſual attendants on a French woman, a *femme de chambre* and a lap dog, travels with ſeveral cages of canary birds, ſome pots of curious exotics, and a favourite cat; all of which muſt be diſpoſed of ſo as to produce no intestine commotions during the journey. Now if you conſider the nature of theſe fellow-travellers, you will allow it not ſo eaſy a matter as may at firſt be ſuppoſed, eſpecially as their fair miſtreſs will not allow any of them to be placed in another

other carriage than her own.—A fray happened yesterday between the cat and the dog, during which the birds were overset, and plants broken. Poor M. de —, with a sort of rueful good nature, separated the combatants, restored order, and was obliged to purchase peace by charging himself with the care of the aggressor.

I should not have dwelt so long on these trifling occurrences, but that they are characteristic. In England, this passion for animals is chiefly confined to old maids, but here it is general. Almost every woman, however numerous her family, has a nursery of birds, an angola, and two or three lap dogs, who share her cares with her husband and children. The dogs have all romantic names, and are enquired after with so much solicitude when they do not make one in a visit, that I was some time before I discovered that *Nina* and *Rosine* were not the young ladies of the family. I do not remember to have seen any husband, however master of his house in other respects, daring enough to displace a favourite animal, even though it occupied the only vacant *fauteuil*.

The entrance into Artois from Picardy, though confounded by the new division, is sufficiently

sufficiently marked by a higher cultivation, and a more fertile soil. The whole country we have passed is agreeable, but uniform; the roads are good, and planted on each side with trees, mostly elms, except here and there some rows of poplar or apple. The land is all open, and sown in divisions of corn, carrots, potatoes, tobacco, and poppies—of which last they make a coarse kind of oil for the use of painters. The country is entirely flat, and the view every where bounded by woods interspersed with villages, whose little spires peeping through the trees have a very pleasing effect.

The people of Artois are said to be highly superstitious, and we have already passed a number of small chapels and crosses, erected by the road side, and surrounded by tufts of trees. These are the inventions of a mistaken piety; yet are they not entirely without their use, and I cannot help regarding them with more complacency than a rigid Protestant might think allowable. The weary traveller here finds shelter from a mid-day sun, and solaces his mind while he reposes his body. The glittering equipage rolls by—he recalls the painful steps he has past, anticipates those which yet remain, and perhaps is tempted to repine; but when he turns
his

his eye on the cross of Him who has promised a recompence to the sufferers of this world, he checks the sigh of envy, forgets the luxury which excited it, and pursues his way with resignation. The Protestant religion proscribes, and the character of the English renders unnecessary, these sensible objects of devotion; but I have been always of opinion, that the levity of the French in general would make them incapable of persevering in a form of worship equally abstracted and rational. The Spaniards, and even the Italians, might abolish their crosses and images, and yet preserve their Christianity; but if the French ceased to be bigots, they would become atheists.

This is a small fortified town, though not of strength to offer any resistance to artillery. Its proximity to the frontier, and the dread of the Austrians, make the inhabitants very patriotic. We were surrounded by a great croud of people on our arrival, who had some suspicion that we were emigrating; however, as soon as our passports were examined and declared legal, they retired very peaceably.

The approach of the enemy keeps up the spirit of the people, and, notwithstanding their dissatisfaction

disaffection at the late events, they have not yet felt the change of their government sufficiently to desire the invasion of an Austrian army. Every village, every cottage, hailed us with the cry of *vive la nation!* The cabaret invites you to drink beer *à la nation*, and offers you lodging *à la nation*—the chandler's shop sells you snuff and hair powder *à la nation*—and there are even patriotic barbers whose signs inform you, that you may be shaved and have your teeth drawn *à la nation!* These are acts of patriotism one cannot reasonably object to; but the frequent and tedious examination of one's passports by people who can't read, is not quite so inoffensive, and I sometimes lose my patience. A very vigilant *Garde Nationale* yesterday, after spelling my passport over for ten minutes, objected that it was not a good one. I maintained that it was; and feeling a momentary importance at the recollection of my country, added, in an assuring tone, "*et d'ailleurs je suis Anglaise et par conséquent libre d'aller où bon me semble.*" The man stared, but admitted my argument, and we passed on.

My room door is half open, and gives me a prospect into that of Mad. de L——, which is on the opposite side of the passage. She has
not

not yet put on her cap, but her grey hair is profusely powdered; and with no other garments than a short under petticoat and a corset, she stands for the edification of all who pass, putting on her rouge with a stick and a bundle of cotton tied to the end of it.—All travellers agree in describing great indelicacy to the French women; yet I have seen no accounts which exaggerate it, and scarce any that have not been more favourable than a strict adherence to truth might justify. This inattractive part of the female national character is not confined to the lower or middling classes of life; and an English woman is as likely to be put to the blush in the boudoir of a Marquise, as in the shop of the grisette, which serves also for her dressing room.

If I am not too idle, or too much amused, you will soon be informed of my arrival at Arras; but though I should neglect to write, be persuaded I shall never cease to be, with affection and esteem, Yours, &c.

Arras, August.

THE appearance of Arras is not busy in proportion to its population, because its population is not equal to its extent; and as it is a large, without being a commercial town, it rather offers a view of the tranquil enjoyment of wealth, than of the bustle and activity by which it is procured. The streets are mostly narrow and ill paved, and the shops look heavy and mean; but the hotels, which chiefly occupy the low town, are large and numerous. What is called *la Petite Place*, is really very large, and small only in comparison of the great one, which, I believe, is the largest in France. It is, indeed, an immense quadrangle—the houses are in the Spanish form, and it has an arcade all round it. The Spaniards, by whom it was built, forgot, probably, that this kind of shelter would not be so desirable here as in their own climate. The manufacture of tapestry, which a single line of Shakspeare has immortalized, and associated with the mirthful image of his fat Knight, has fallen into decay. The manufactures of linen and woollen are but inconsiderable; and one, which existed till lately, of a very durable porcelain, is totally neglected. The principal article of commerce is
lace,

lace, which is made here in great quantities. The people of all ages, from five years old to seventy, are employed in this delicate fabrick. In fine weather you will see whole streets lined with females, each with her cushion on her lap. The people of Arras are uncommonly dirty, and the lacemakers do not in this matter differ from their fellow citizens; yet at the door of a house, which, but for the surrounding ones, you would suppose the common receptacle of all the filth in the vicinage, is often seated a female artizan, whose fingers are forming a point of unblemished whiteness. It is inconceivable how fast the bobbins move under their hands; and they seem to bestow so little attention on their work, that it looks more like the amusement of idleness than an effort of industry. I am no judge of the arguments of philosophers and politicians *for* and *against* the use of luxury in a state; but if it be allowable at all, much may be said in favour of this pleasing article of it. Children may be taught to make it at a very early age, and they can work at home under the inspection of their parents, which is certainly preferable to crouding together in manufactories, where their health is injured, and their morals are corrupted.

By

By requiring no more implements than about five shillings will purchase, a lacemaker is not dependent on the shopkeeper, nor the head of a manufactory. All who choose to work have it within their own power, and can dispose of the produce of their labour, without being at the mercy of an avaricious employer; for though a tolerable good workwoman can gain a decent livelihood by selling to the shops, yet the profit of the retailer is so great, that if he rejected a piece of lace, or refused to give a reasonable price for it, a certain sale would be found with the individual consumer: and it is a proof of the independence of this employ, that no one will at present dispose of her work for *paper*, and it still continues to be paid for in money. Another argument in favour of encouraging lace-making is, that it cannot be usurped by men: you may have men-milliners, men-man-tuamakers, and even lady's valets, but you cannot well fashion the clumsy and inflexible fingers of man to lace-making. We import great quantities of lace from this country, yet I imagine we might, by attention, be enabled to supply other countries, instead of purchasing abroad ourselves. The art of spinning is daily improving in England; and if thread sufficiently fine can be manufactured, there is no reason

reason why we should not equal our neighbours in the beauty of this article. The hands of English women are more delicate than those of the French; and our climate is much the same as that of Brussels, Arras, Lisle, &c. where the finest lace is made.

The population of Arras is estimated at about twenty-five thousand souls, though many people tell me it is greater. It has, however, been lately much thinned by emigration, suppression of convents, and the decline of trade, occasioned by the absence of so many rich inhabitants.—The Jacobins are here become very formidable: they have taken possession of a church for their meetings, and, from being the ridicule, are become the terror of all moderate people.

Yesterday was appointed for taking the new oath of liberty and equality. I did not see the ceremony, as the town was in much confusion, and it was deemed unsafe to be from home. I understand it was attended only by the very refuse of the people, and that, as a *gallanterie analogue*, the president of the department gave his arm to Madame Duchéne, who sells apples in a cellar, and is *Présidente* of the Jacobin club.

club. It is, however, reported to-day, that she is in disgrace with the society for her condescension; and her parading the town with a man of forty thousand livres a year is thought to be too great a compliment to the aristocracy of riches; so that *Monf. le President's* political gallantry has availed him nothing. He has debased, and made himself the ridicule of the Aristocrats and Constitutionalists, without paying his court, as he intended, to the popular faction. I would always wish it to happen so to those who offer up incense to the mob. As human beings, as one's fellow creatures, the poor and uninformed have a claim to our affection and benevolence, but when they become legislators, they are absurd and contemptible tyrants.—*A propos*—we were obliged to acknowledge this new sovereignty by illuminating the house on the occasion; and this was not ordered by nocturnal vociferation, as in England, but by a regular command from an officer deputed for that purpose.

I am concerned to see the people accustomed to take a number of incompatible oaths with indifference: it neither will nor can come to any good; and I am ready to exclaim with Juliet, "Swear not at all." Or, if ye must swear,

swear, quarrel not with the Pope, that your consciences may at least be relieved by dispensations and indulgences.

To-morrow we go to Lisle, notwithstanding the report that it has already been summoned to surrender. You will scarcely suppose it possible, yet we find it difficult to learn the certainty of this, at the distance of only thirty miles: but communication is much less frequent and easy here than in England. I am not one of those “unfortunate women who delight in war;” and, perhaps, the sight of this place, so famous for its fortifications, will not be very amusing to me, nor furnish much matter of communication for my friends; but I shall write, if it be only to assure you that I am not made prize of by the Austrians. Yours, &c.

Lisle, August.

YOU restless islanders, who are continually racking imagination to perfect the art of moving from one place to another, and who can drop asleep in a carriage and wake at an hundred miles distance, have no notion of all the difficulties of a day's journey here. In the first place

place, all the horses of private persons have been taken for the use of the army, and those for hire are constantly employed in going to the camp—hence there is a difficulty of horses. Then a French carriage is never in order, and in France a job is not to be done just when you want it—so that there is often a difficulty of vehicles. Then there is the difficulty of passports, and the difficulty of gates, if you want to depart early. Then the difficulties of patching harness on the road, and, above all, the inflexible *sangfroid* of drivers. All these things considered, you will not wonder that we came here a day after we intended, and arrived at night, when we ought to have arrived at noon. The carriage wanted a trifling repair, and we could get neither passports nor horses. The horses were gone to the army, the municipality to the club, and the blacksmith was employed at the barracks in making a patriotic harangue to the soldiers.—But we at length surmounted all these obstacles, and reached this place last night.

The road between Arras and Lisle is equally rich with that we before passed, but is much more diversified. The plain of Lens is now such a scene of fertility, that one forgets it has once been that of war and carnage. We
endeavoured

endeavoured to learn in the town whereabouts the column was erected that commemorates that famous battle,* but no one seemed to know any thing of the matter. One, who, we flattered ourselves, looked more intelligent than the rest, and whom we supposed might be an attorney, upon being asked for this spot,—(where, added Mr. de —, by way of assisting his memory, “*le Prince de Condé s’est battu si bien,*”)—replied, “*Pour la bataille je n’en sais rien, mais pour le Prince de Condé il y a déjà quelque tems qu’il est émigré—on le dit à Coblenz.*” After this we thought it in vain to make any farther enquiry, and continued our walk about the town.

Mr. P——, who, according to French custom, had not breakfasted, took a fancy to stop at a baker’s shop and buy a roll. The man bestowed so much more civility on us than our two sols were worth, that I observed, on quitting the shop, I was sure he must be an Aristocrat. Mr. P——, who is a warm Constitutional, disputed the justice of my inference, and we agreed to return, and learn the baker’s political principles. After asking for

* 1648.

more rolls, we accosted him with the usual phrase, "*Et vous, Monsieur, vous etes bon patriote.*"—" *Ab mon Dieu oui,* (replied he) *il faut bien l'être à present.*"—Mr. P—— admitted the man's tone of voice and countenance as good evidence, and acknowledged I was right.—It is certain that the French have taken it into their heads that coarseness of manners is a necessary consequence of liberty, and that there is a kind of *léze nation* in being too civil; so that, in general, I think I can discover the principles of shopkeepers, even without the indications of a melancholy mien at the assignats, or lamentations on the times.

The new doctrine of primeval equality has already made some progress. At a small inn at Carvin, where, upon the assurance that they had every thing in the world, we stopped to dine, on my observing they had laid more covers than were necessary, the woman answered, "*Et les domestiques, ne dinent ils pas?*" We told her not with us, and the plates were taken away; but we heard her muttering in the kitchen that she believed we were aristocrats going to emigrate. She might imagine also that we were difficult to satisfy, for we found it impossible to dine, and left the house hungry, notwithstanding

notwithstanding there was "every thing in the world" in it.

On the road between Carvin and Lisle we saw Dumourier, who is going to take the command of the army, and has now been visiting the camp of Maulde. He appears to be under the middle size, about fifty years of age, with a brown complexion, dark eyes, and an animated countenance. He was not originally distinguished either by birth or fortune, and has arrived at his present situation by a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, by great and various talents, much address, and a spirit of intrigue. He is now supported by the prevailing party, and, I confess, I could not regard with much complacence a man, whom the machinations of the Jacobins had forced into the ministry, and whose hypocritical and affected resignation has contributed to deceive the people, and ruin the King.

Lisle has all the air of a great town, and the mixture of commercial industry and military occupation gives it a very gay and populous appearance. The Lillois are highly patriotic, highly incensed against the Austrians, and regard the approaching siege with more contempt

than apprehension. I asked the servant who was making my bed this morning, how far the enemy was off. "*Une lieue et demie, ou deux lieues, à moins qu'ils ne soient plus avancés depuis hier,*" replied she, with the utmost indifference.—I own, I did not much approve of such a vicinage, and a view of the fortifications (which did not make the less impression, because I did not understand them,) was absolutely necessary to raise my drooping courage.

This morning was dedicated to visiting the churches, citadel, and Collifée (a place of amusement in the manner of our Vauxhall); but all these things have been so often described by much abler pens, that I cannot modestly pretend to add any thing on the subject.

In the evening we were at the theatre, which is large and handsome; and the constant residence of a numerous garrison enables it to entertain a very good set of performers:—their operas in particular are extremely well got up. I saw *Zemire et Azor* given better than at Drury Lane.—In the farce, which was called *Le François à Londres*, was introduced a character they called that of an Englishman (Jack Roastbeef) who pays his addressee to a nobleman's daughter,

ter, in a box coat, a large hat slouched over his eyes, and an oaken towel in his hand—in short, the whole figure exactly resembling that of a watchman. His conversation is gross and sarcastic, interlarded with oaths, or relieved by fits of sullen taciturnity—such a lover as one may suppose, though rich, and the choice of the lady's father, makes no impression; and the author has flattered the national vanity by making the heroine give the preference to a French Marquis. Now there is no doubt but nine-tenths of the audience thought this a good portraiture of the English character, and enjoyed it with all the satisfaction of conscious superiority.—The ignorance that prevails with regard to our manners and customs, among a people so near us, is surprizing. It is true, that the noblesse who have visited England with proper recommendations, and have been introduced to the best society, do us justice: the men of letters also, who, for party motives, extol every thing English, have done us perhaps more than justice. But I speak of the French in general, not the lower classes only—but the gentry of the provinces, and even those who in other respects have pretensions to information. The fact is, living in England is expensive: a Frenchman, whose income here supports him

as

as a gentleman, goes over and finds all his habits of œconomy insufficient to keep him from exceeding the limits he had prescribed to himself. His decent lodging alone costs him a great part of his revenue, and obliges him to be strictly parsimonious of the rest. This drives him to associate chiefly with his own countrymen, to dine at obscure coffee-houses, and pay his court to opera-dancers. He sees, indeed, our theatres, our public walks, the outside of our palaces, and the inside of churches: but this gives him no idea of the manners of the people in superior life, or even of easy fortune. Thus he goes home, and asserts to his untravelled countrymen, that our King and nobility are ill lodged, our churches mean, and that the English are barbarians, who dine without soup, use no napkins, and eat with their knives.—I have heard a gentleman of some respectability here observe, that our usual dinner was an immense joint of meat half drest, and a dish of vegetables scarcely drest at all.—Upon questioning him, I discovered he had lodged in St. Martin's Lane, had likewise boarded at a country attorney's, and dined at an ordinary at Margate.

Some few weeks ago the Marquis de P—— set out from Paris in the diligence, and accompanied

panied by his servant, with a design of emigrating. Their only fellow-traveller was an Englishman, whom they frequently addressed, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with; but he either remained silent, or gave them to understand he was entirely ignorant of the language. Under this persuasion the Marquis and his valet freely discussed their affairs, arranged their plan of emigration, and expressed, with little ceremony, their political opinions.—At the end of their journey they were denounced by their companion, and conducted to prison. The magistrate who took the information mentioned the circumstance when I happened to be present. Indignant at such an act in an Englishman, I enquired his name. You will judge of my surprize, when he assured me it was the English ambassador. I observed to him, that it was not common for our ambassadors to travel in stage-coaches: this, he said, he knew; but that having reason to suspect the Marquis, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur had had the goodness to have him watched, and had taken this journey on purpose to detect him. It was not without much reasoning, and the evidence of a lady who had been in England long enough to know the impossibility of such a thing, that I would justify Lord G—— from this piece of complaisance

fance to the Jacobins, and convince the worthy magistrate he had been imposed upon: yet this man is the professor of eloquence at a college, is the oracle of the Jacobin society, and may perhaps become a member of the Convention. This seems so almost incredibly absurd, that I should fear to repeat it, were it not known to many besides myself; but I think I may venture to pronounce, from my own observation, and that of others, whose judgment, and occasions of exercising it, give weight to their opinions, that the generality of the French who have read a little are mere pedants, nearly unacquainted with modern nations, their commercial and political relations, their internal laws, characters, or manners. Their studies are chiefly confined to Rollin and Plutarch, the deistical works of Voltaire, and the visionary politics of Jean Jaques. Hence they amuse their hearers with allusions to Cæsar and Lycurgus, the Rubicon, and Thermopylæ. Hence they pretend to be too enlightened for belief, and despise all governments not founded on the *contrat social*, or the *profession de foi*.—They are an age removed from the useful literature and general information of the middle classes in our own country—they talk familiarly of Sparta and Lacedemon, and have about the same idea of Russia as they have of Caffraria. Yours.

“MARRIED

Lille.

"**MARRIED** to another, and that before those shoes were old with which she followed my poor father to the grave."—There is scarcely any circumstance or situation, in which, if one's memory were good, one should not be mentally quoting Shakspeare. I have just now been whispering the above, as I passed the altar of liberty, which still remains on the *Grand Place*. But "a month, a little month" ago, on this altar the French swore to maintain the constitution, and to be faithful to the law and the King; yet this constitution is no more, the laws are violated, the King is dethroned, and the altar is now only a monument of levity and perjury, which they have not feeling enough to remove.

The Austrians are daily expected to besiege this place, and they may destroy, but they will not take it. I do not, as you may suppose, venture to speak so decisively in a military point of view—I know as little as possible of the excellencies of Vauban, or the adequacy of the garrison; but I draw my inference from the spirit of enthusiasm which prevails among the inhabitants of every class—every individual
seems

seems to partake of it : the streets resound with patriotic acclamations, patriotic songs, war, and defiance.—Nothing can be more animating than the theatre. Every allusion to the Austrians, every song or sentence expressive of determined resistance, is followed by bursts of assent, easily distinguishable not to be the effort of party, but the sentiment of the people in general. There are, doubtless, here, as in all other places, party dissensions ; but the threatened siege seems at least to have united all for their common defence : they know that a bomb makes no distinction between Feuillans, Jacobins, or Aristocrates, and neither are so anxious to destroy the other, when it is only to be done at such a risk to themselves. I am even willing to hope that something better than mere selfishness has a share in their uniting to preserve one of the finest, and, in every sense, one of the most interesting towns in France.

Lille, Saturday.

WE are just on our departure for Arras, where, I fear, we shall scarcely arrive before the gates are shut. We have been detained here much beyond our time, by a circumstance infinitely

finitely shocking, though, in fact, not properly a subject of regret. One of the assassins of General Dillon was this morning guillotined before the hotel where we are lodged.—I did not, as you will conclude, see the operation; but the mere circumstance of knowing the moment it was performed, and being so near it, has much unhinged me. The man, however, deserved his fate, and such an example was particularly necessary at this time, when we are without a government, and the laws are relaxed. The mere privation of life is, perhaps more quickly effected by this instrument than by any other means; but when we recollect that the preparation for, and apprehension of, death, constitute its greatest terrors; that a human hand must give motion to the guillotine as well as to the axe; and that either accustoms a people, already sanguinary, to the sight of blood, I think little is gained by the invention. It was imagined by a Monsr. Guillotin, a physician of Paris, and member of the Constituent Assembly. The original design seems not so much to spare pain to the criminal, as obloquy to the executioner. I, however, perceive little difference between a man's directing a guillotine, or tying a rope; and I believe the people are of the same opinion. They will never see
any

any thing but a *bourreau* in the man whose province it is to execute the sentence of the laws, whatever name he may be called by, or whatever instrument he may make use of.—I have concluded this letter with a very unpleasant subject, but my pen is guided by circumstances, and I do not invent, but communicate.—Adieu. Yours, &c.

Arras, September 1.

HAD I been accompanied by an antiquary this morning, his sensibility would have been severely exercised; for even I, whose respect for antiquity is not scientific, could not help lamenting the modern rage for devastation which has seized the French. They are removing all “the time-honoured figures” of the cathedral, and painting its massive supporters in the style of a ball-room. The elaborate uncouthness of ancient sculpture is not, indeed, very beautiful; yet I have often fancied there was something more simply pathetic in the awkward effigy of an hero kneeling amidst his trophies, or a regal pair with their supplicating hands and surrounding offspring, than in the graceful figures and poetic allegories of the modern artist. The humble intreaty to the reader

reader to "prayer for the souls of the departed," is not very elegant—yet is it better calculated to recal the wanderings of morality, than the flattering epitaph, a fame hovering in the air, or the suspended wreath of the remunerating angel.—But I moralize in vain—the rage of these new Goths is inexorable: they seem solicitous to destroy every vestige of civilization, lest the people should remember they have not always been barbarians.

After obtaining an order from the municipality, we went to see the gardens and palace of the Bishop, who has emigrated. The garden has nothing very remarkable, but is large and well laid out, according to the old style. It forms a very agreeable walk, and, when the Bishop possessed it, was open for the enjoyment of the inhabitants, but it is now shut up and in disorder. The house is plain, and substantially furnished, and exhibits no appearance of unbecoming luxury. The whole is now the property of the nation, and will soon be disposed of.—I could not help feeling a sensation of melancholy as we walked over the apartments. Every thing is marked in an inventory, just as left; and an air of arrangement and residence leads one to reflect, that the owner did not

imagine at his departure he was quitting it perhaps for ever. I am not partial to the original emigrants, yet much may be said for the Bishop of Arras. He was pursued by ingratitude, and marked for persecution. The Robespierres were young men whom he had taken from a mean state, had educated, and patronized. The revolution gave them an opportunity of displaying their talents, and their talents procured them popularity. They became enemies to the clergy, because their patron was a Bishop; and endeavoured to render their benefactor odious, because the world could not forget, nor they forgive, how much they were indebted to him.—Vice is not often passive; nor is there often a medium between gratitude for benefits, and hatred to the author of them. A little mind is hurt by the remembrance of obligation—begins by forgetting, and, not uncommonly, ends by persecuting.

We dined and passed the afternoon from home to-day. After dinner our hostess, as usual, proposed cards; and, as usual in French societies, every one assented: we waited, however, some time, and no cards came—till, at length, conversation parties were formed, and they were no longer thought of. I have since learned,

learned, from one of the young women of the house, that the butler and two footmen had all betaken themselves to clubs and *Guinguettes*, and the cards, counters, &c. could not be obtained. This is another evil arising from the circumstances of the times. All people of property have begun to bury their money and plate, and as the servants are often unavoidably privy to it, they are become idle and impertinent—they make a kind of commutation of diligence for fidelity, and imagine that the observance of the one exempts them from the other. The clubs are a constant receptacle for idleness; and servants who think proper to frequent them do it with very little ceremony, knowing that few whom they serve would be imprudent enough to discharge them for their patriotism in attending a Jacobin society. Even servants who are not converts to the new principles cannot resist the temptation of abusing a little the power which they acquire from a knowledge of family affairs. Perhaps the effect of the revolution has not, on the whole, been favourable to the morals of the lower class of people; but this shall be the subject of discussion at some future period, when I shall have had farther opportunities of judging.

We yesterday visited the Oratoire, a seminary for education, which is now suppressed. The building is immense, and admirably calculated for the purpose, but is already in a state of dilapidation; so that, I fear, by the time the legislature has determined what system of instruction shall be substituted for that which has been abolished, the children (as the French are fond of examples from the ancients) will take their lessons, like the Greeks, in the open air; and, in the mean while, become expert in lying and thieving, like the Spartans.

The Superior of the house is an immoderate revolutionist, speaks English very well, and is a great admirer of our party writers. In his room I observed a vast quantity of English books, and on his chimney stood what he called a patriotic clock, the dial of which was placed between two pyramids, on which were inscribed the names of republican authors, and on the top of one was that of our countryman, Mr. Thomas Paine—whom, by the way, I understand you intended to exhibit in a much more conspicuous and less tranquil situation. I assure you, though you are ungrateful on your side the water, he is in high repute here—his works are translated—all the Jacobins who *can* read
quote,

quote, and all who *can't*, admire him; and possibly, at the very moment *you* are sentencing him to an installment in the pillory, *we* may be awarding him a triumph.—Perhaps we are both right. He deserves the pillory from you for having endeavoured to destroy a good constitution—and the French may with equal reason grant him a triumph, as their constitution is likely to be so bad, that even Mr. Thomas Paine's writings may make it better!

Our house is situated within view of a very pleasant public walk, where I am daily amused with a sight of the recruits at their exercise. This is not quite so regular a business as the drill in the Park. The exercise is often interrupted by disputes between the officer and his *élèves*—some are for turning to the right, others to the left, and the matter is not unfrequently adjusted by each going the way that seemeth best unto himself. The author of the "*Actes des Apôtres*" cites a Colonel who reprimanded one of his corps for walking ill—" *Eb Diantre*, (replied the man) *comment veux tu que je marche bien quand tu as fait mes souliers trop étroits*:"—but this is no longer a pleasantry—such circumstances are very common. A Colonel may often be *tailor* to his own regiment, and a Captain

operate on the heads of his whole company, in his *civil* capacity, before he commands them in his military one.

The walks I have just mentioned have been extremely beautiful, but a great part of the trees have been cut down, and the ornamental parts destroyed, since the revolution—I know not why, as they were open to the poor as well as the rich, and were a great embellishment to the low town. You may think it strange that I should be continually dating some destruction from the æra of the revolution—that I speak of every thing demolished, and of nothing replaced. But it is not my fault—“If freedom grows destructive, I must paint it:” though I should tell you, that in many streets where convents have been sold, houses are building with the materials on the same site.—This is, however, not a work of the nation, but of individuals, who have made their purchases cheap, and are hastening to change the form of their property, lest some new revolution should deprive them of it.—Yours, &c.

NOTHING

Arras, September.

NOTHING more powerfully excites the attention of a stranger on his first arrival, than the number and wretchedness of the poor at Arras. In all places poverty claims compassion, but here compassion is accompanied by horror—one dares not contemplate the object one commiserates, and charity relieves with an averted eye. Perhaps with Him, who regards equally the forlorn beggar stretched on the threshold, consumed by filth and disease, and the blooming beauty who avoids while she succours him, the offering of humanity scarcely expiates the involuntary disgust; yet such is the weakness of our nature, that there exists a degree of misery against which one's senses are not proof, and benevolence itself revolts at the appearance of the poor of Arras.—These are not the cold and fastidious reflections of an unfeeling mind—they are not made without pain: nor have I often felt the want of riches and consequence so much as in my incapacity to promote some means of permanent and substantial remedy for the evils I have been describing. I have frequently enquired the cause of this singular misery, but can only learn that it always has been so. I fear it is, that the

poor are without energy, and the rich without generosity. The decay of manufactures since the last century must have reduced many families to indigence. These have been able to subsist on the refuse of luxury, but, too supine for exertion, they have sought for nothing more; while the great, discharging their consciences with the superfluity of what administered to their pride, fostered the evil, instead of endeavouring to remedy it. But the benevolence of the French is not often active, nor extensive; it is more frequently a religious duty than a sentiment. They content themselves with affording a mere existence to wretchedness; and are almost strangers to those enlightened and generous efforts which act beyond the moment, and seek not only to relieve poverty, but to banish it. Thus, through the frigid and indolent charity of the rich, the misery which was at first accidental is perpetuated, beggary and idleness become habitual, and are transmitted, like more fortunate inheritances, from one generation to another.—This is not a mere conjecture—I have listened to the histories of many of these unhappy outcasts, who were more than thirty years old, and they have all told me, they were born in the state in which I beheld them, and that they did not remember

member to have heard that their parents were in any other. The National Assembly professes to effectuate an entire regeneration of the country, and to eradicate all evils, moral, physical, and political. I heartily wish the numerous and miserable poor with which Arras abounds, may become one of the first objects of reform; and that a nation which boasts itself the most polished, the most powerful, and the most philosophic in the world, may not offer to the view so many objects shocking to humanity.

The citadel of Arras is very strong, and, as I am told, the *chef d'œuvre* of Vauban; but placed with so little judgement, that the military call it *la belle inutile*. It is now uninhabited, and wears an appearance of desolation—the commandant and all the officers of the ancient government having been forced to abandon it; their houses also are much damaged, and the gardens entirely destroyed. I never heard that this popular commotion had any other motive than the general war of the new doctrines on the old.

I am sorry to see that most of the volunteers who go to join the army are either old men or boys, tempted by extraordinary pay and scarcity of employ. A cobbler who has been used
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to rear canary birds for Mad. de —, brought us this morning all the birds he was possessed of, and told us he was going to-morrow to the frontiers. We asked him why, at his age, he should think of joining the army. He said, he had already served, and that there were a few months unexpired of the time that would entitle him to his pension.—“Yes; but in the mean while you may get killed; and then of what service will your claim to a pension be?”—“*N'ayez pas peur Madame—Je me menagerai bien—on ne se bat pas pour ces gueux là comme pour son Roi.*”

M. de — is just returned from the camp of Maulde, where he has been to see his son. He says, there is great disorder and want of discipline, and that by some means or other the common soldiers abound more in money, and game higher, than their officers. There are two young women, inhabitants of the town of St. Amand, who go constantly out on all skirmishing parties, exercise daily with the men, and have killed several of the enemy. They are both pretty—one only sixteen, the other a year or two older. Mr. de — saw them as they were just returning from a reconnoitring party. Perhaps I ought to have been ashamed after this
recital

recital to decline an invitation from Mr. de R——'s son to dine with him at the camp; but I cannot but feel that I am an extreme coward, and that I should eat with no appetite in sight of an Austrian army. The very idea of these modern Camillas terrifies me—their creation seems an error of nature.*

Our host, whose politeness is indefatigable, accompanied us a few days ago to St. Eloy, a large and magnificent abbey, about six miles from Arras. It is built on a terrace, which commands the surrounding country as far as Douay; and I think I counted an hundred and fifty steps from the house to the bottom of the garden, which is on a level with the road. The cloisters are paved with marble, and the church neat and beautiful beyond description. The iron work of the choir imitates flowers and

* Their name was Fernig; they were natives of St. Amand, and of no remarkable origin. They followed Dumourier into Flanders, where they signalized themselves greatly, and became Aides-de-Camp to that General. At the time of his defection, one of them was shot by a soldier, whose regiment she was endeavouring to gain over. Their house having been razed by the Austrians at the beginning of the war, was rebuilt at the expence of the nation; but, upon their participation in Dumourier's treachery, a second decree of the Assembly again levelled it with the ground.

foliage with so much taste and delicacy, that (but for the colour) one would rather suppose it to be foil, than any durable material.—The monks still remain, and, although the decree has passed for their suppression, they cannot suppose it will take place. They are mostly old men, and, though I am no friend to these institutions, they were so polite and hospitable that I could not help wishing they were permitted, according to the design of the first Assembly, to die in their habitations—especially as the situation at St. Eloy renders the building useless for any other purpose.—A friend of Mr. de —— has a charming country-house near the abbey, which he has been obliged to deny himself the enjoyment of, during the greatest part of the summer; for whenever the family returns to Arras, their persons and their carriage are searched at the gate as strictly as though they were smugglers just arrived from the coast, under the pretence that they may assist the religious of St. Eloy in securing some of their property, previous to the final seizure.

I observe, in walking the streets here, that the common people still retain much of the Spanish cast of features: the women are remarkably plain, and appear still more so by wearing *faals*.

The

The *faal* is about two ells of black filk or stuff, which is hung without taste or form on the head, and is extremely unbecoming: but it is worn only by the lower class, or by the aged and devotees.

I am a very *voluminous* correspondent, but if I tire you, it is a proper punishment for your insincerity in desiring me to continue so. I have heard of a governor of one of our West India islands who was universally detested by its inhabitants, but who, on going to England, found no difficulty in procuring addressees expressive of approbation and esteem. The consequence was, he came back and continued governor for life.—Do you make the application of my anecdote, and I shall persevere in scribbling.—Ever Yours.

Arras.

IT is not fashionable at present to frequent any public place; but as we are strangers, and of no party, we often pass our evenings at the theatre. I am fond of it—not so much on account of the representation, as of the opportunity which it affords for observing the dispositions of the people,

ple, and the bias intended to be given them. The stage is now become a kind of political school, where the people are taught hatred to Kings, Nobility, and Clergy, according as the persecution of the moment requires; and, I think, one may often judge from new pieces the meditated sacrifice. A year ago, all the sad catalogue of human errors were personified in Counts and Marquisses; they were not represented as individuals whom wealth and power had made something too proud, and much too luxurious, but as an order of monsters, whose existence, independently of their characters, was a crime, and whose hereditary possessions alone implied a guilt, not to be expiated but by the forfeiture of them. This, you will say, was not very judicious; and that by establishing a sort of incompatibility of virtue with titular distinctions, the odium was transferred from the living to the dead—from those who possessed these distinctions to those who instituted them. But, unfortunately, the French were disposed to find their noblesse culpable, and to reject every thing which tended to excuse or favour them. The *bauteur* of the noblesse acted as a fatal equivalent to every other crime; and many, who did not credit other imputations, rejoiced in the humiliation of their pride. The people,
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the rich merchants, and even the lesser gentry, all eagerly concurred in the destruction of an order that had disdained or excluded them; and, perhaps, of all the innovations which have taken place, the abolition of rank has excited the least interest.

It is now less necessary to blacken the noblesse, and the compositions of the day are directed against the Throne, the Clergy, and Monastic Orders. All the tyrants of past ages are brought from the shelves of faction and pedantry, and assimilated to the mild and circumscribed monarchs of modern Europe. The doctrine of popular sovereignty is artfully instilled, and the people are stimulated to exert a power which they must implicitly delegate to those who have duped and misled them. The frenzy of a mob is represented as the sublimest effort of patriotism; and ambition and revenge, usurping the title of national justice, immolate their victims with applause. The tendency of such pieces is too obvious; and they may, perhaps, succeed in familiarizing the minds of the people to events which, a few months ago, would have filled them with horror. There are also numerous theatrical exhibitions, preparatory to the removal of the nuns from their
convents,

convents, and to the banishment of the priests. Ancient prejudices are not yet obliterated, and I believe some pains have been taken to justify these persecutions by calumny. The history of our dissolution of the monasteries has been ransacked for scandal, and the bigotry and abuses of all countries are reduced into abstracts, and exposed on the stage. The most implacable revenge, the most refined malice, the extremes of avarice and cruelty, are wrought into tragedies, and displayed as acting under the mask of religion and the impunity of a cloister; while operas and farces, with ridicule still more successful, exhibit convents as the abode of licentiousness, intrigue, and superstition.

These efforts have been sufficiently successful—not from the merit of the pieces, but from the novelty of the subject. The people in general were strangers to the interior of convents: they beheld them with that kind of respect which is usually produced in uninformed minds by mystery and prohibition. Even the monastic habit was sacred from dramatic uses; so that a representation of cloisters, monks, and nuns, their costumes and manners, never fails of attracting the multitude. But the same cause which renders them curious, makes them credulous.

credulous. Those who have seen no farther than the Grille, and those who have been educated in convents, are equally unqualified to judge of the lives of *the religious*; and their minds, having no internal conviction or knowledge of the truth, easily become the converts of slander and falsehood.

I cannot help thinking that there is something mean and cruel in this procedure. If policy demand the sacrifice, it does not require that the victims should be rendered odious; and if it be necessary to dispossess them of their habitations, they ought not, at the moment they are thrown upon the world, to be painted as monsters unworthy of its pity or protection. It is the cowardice of the assassin, who murders before he dares to rob.

This custom of making public amusements subservient to party, has, I doubt not, much contributed to the destruction of all against whom it has been employed; and theatrical calumny seems always to be the harbinger of approaching ruin to its object: yet this is not the greatest evil which may arise from these insidious politics—they are equally unfavourable both to the morals and taste of the people; the first

are injured beyond calculation, and the latter corrupted beyond amendment. The orders of society, which formerly inspired respect or veneration, are now debased and exploded, and mankind, once taught to see nothing but vice and hypocrisy in those whom they had been accustomed to regard as models of virtue, are easily led to doubt the very existence of virtue itself: they know not where to turn for either instruction or example; no prospect is offered to them but the dreary and uncomfortable view of general depravity; and the individual is no longer encouraged to struggle with vicious propensities, when he concludes them irresistibly inherent in his nature. Perhaps it was not possible to imagine principles at once so seductive and ruinous as those now disseminated. How are the morals of the people to resist a doctrine which teaches them that the rich only can be criminal, and that poverty is a substitute for virtue—that wealth is holden by the sufferance of those who do not possess it—and that he who is the frequenter of a club, or the applauder of a party, is exempt from the duties of his station, and has a right to insult and oppress his fellow-citizens? All the weaknesses of humanity are flattered and called to the aid of this pernicious system of revolutionary ethics; and if France
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yet continues in a state of civilization, it is because Providence has not yet abandoned her to the influence of such a system.

Taste is, I repeat it, as little a gainer by the revolution as morals. The pieces which were best calculated to form and refine the minds of the people, all abound with maxims of loyalty, with respect for religion, and the subordinations of civil society. These are all prohibited; and are replaced by fustian declamations, tending to promote anarchy and discord—by vulgar and immoral farces, and insidious and flattering panegyrics on the vices of low life. No drama can succeed that is not supported by the faction; and this support is to be procured only by vilifying the Throne, the Clergy, and Noblesse. This is a succedaneum for literary merit, and those who disapprove are menaced into silence; while the multitude, who do not *judge* but *imitate*, applaud with their leaders—and thus all their ideas become vitiated, and imbibe the corruption of their favourite amusement.

I have dwelt on this subject longer than I intended; but as I would not be supposed prejudiced nor precipitate in my assertions, I will, by the first occasion, send you some of the most

popular farces and tragedies: you may then decide yourself upon the tendency; and by comparing the dispositions of the French before, and within, the last two years, you may also determine whether or not my conclusions are warranted by fact. Adieu.—Yours.

Arras.

OUR countrymen who visit France for the first time—their imaginations filled with the epithets which the vanity of one nation has appropriated, and the indulgence of the other sanctioned—are astonished to find this “land of elegance,” this refined people, extremely inferior to the English in all the arts that minister to the comfort and accommodation of life. They are surprized to feel themselves starved by the intrusion of all the winds of heaven, or smothered by volumes of smoke—that no lock will either open or shut—that the drawers are all immoveable—and that neither chairs nor tables can be preserved in equilibrium. In vain do they enquire for a thousand conveniences which to them seem indispensable; they are not to be procured, or even their use is unknown: till at length, after a residence in a score of houses,

houses, in all of which they observe the same deficiencies, they begin to grow sceptical, to doubt the pretended superiority of France, and, perhaps for the first time, do justice to their own unassuming country. It must however, be confessed, that if the chimnies smoke, they are usually surrounded by marble—that the unstable chair is often covered with silk—and that if a room be cold, it is plentifully decked with gilding, pictures, and glasses.—In short, a French house is generally more showy than convenient, and seldom conveys that idea of domestic comfort which is the luxury of an Englishman.

I observe, that the most prevailing ornaments here are family portraits: almost every dwelling, even among the lower kind of tradesmen, is peopled with these ensigns of vanity; and the painters employed on these occasions, however deficient in other requisites of their art, seem to have an unfortunate knack at preserving likenesses. Heads powdered even whiter than the originals, laced waistcoats, enormous lappets, and countenances all ingeniously disposed so as to smile at each other, encumber the wainscot, and distress the unlucky visitor, who is obliged to bear testimony to the resemblance. When

one sees whole rooms filled with these figures, one cannot help reflecting on the goodness of Providence, which thus distributes self-love, in proportion as it denies those gifts that excite the admiration of others.

You must not understand what I have said on the furniture of French houses as applying to those of the nobility or people of extraordinary fortunes, because they are enabled to add the conveniences of other countries to the luxuries of their own. Yet even these, in my opinion, have not the uniform elegance of an English habitation: there is always some disparity between the workmanship and the materials—some mixture of splendor and clumsiness, and a want of what the painters call *keeping*; but the houses of the gentry, the lesser noblesse, and merchants, are for the most part as I have described—abounding in silk, marble, glasses, and pictures; but ill finished, dirty, and deficient in articles of real use.—I should, however, notice, that genteel people are cleaner here than in the interior parts of the kingdom. The floors are in general of oak, or sometimes of brick; but they are always rubbed bright, and have not that filthy appearance which so often disgusts one in French houses.

The

The heads of the lower classes of people are much disturbed by these new principles of universal equality. We enquired of a man we saw near a coach this morning if it was hired. "Monfieur, (quoth he—then checking himself suddenly,) no, I forgot, I ought not to say Monfieur, for they tell me I am equal to any body in the world: yet, after all, I know not well if this may be true; and as I have drunk out all I am worth, I believe I had better go home and begin work again to-morrow." This new disciple of equality had indeed all the appearance of having sacrificed to the success of the cause, and was then recovering from a dream of greatness which he told us had lasted two days.

Since the day of taking the new oath we have met many equally elevated, though less civil. Some are undoubtedly paid, but others will distress their families for weeks by this celebration of their new discoveries, and must, after all, like our intoxicated philosopher, be obliged to return "to work again to-morrow."

I must now bid you adieu—and, in doing so, naturally turn my thoughts to that country where the rights of the people consist not of sterile

and metaphysic declarations, but of real defence and protection. May they for ever remain uninterrupted by the devastating chimeras of their neighbours; and if they seek reform, may it be moderate and permanent, acceded to reason, and not extorted by violence! Yours, &c.

September 3.

WE were so much alarmed at the theatre on Thursday, that I believe we shall not venture again to amuse ourselves at the risk of a similar occurrence. About the middle of the piece, a violent outcry began from all parts of the house, and seemed to be directed against our box; and I perceived Madame Duchéne, the Presidente of the Jacobins, heading the legions of Paradise with peculiar animation. You may imagine we were not a little terrified. I anxiously examined the dress of myself and my companions, and observing nothing that could offend the affected simplicity of the times, prepared to quit the house. A friendly voice, however, exerting itself above the clamour, informed us that the offensive objects were a cloak and a shawl which hung over the front of the box.— You will scarcely suppose such grossness possible
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among a civilized people; but the fact is, our friends are of the proscribed class, and we were insulted because in their society.—I have before noticed, that the guards which were stationed in the theatre before the revolution are now removed, and a municipal officer, made conspicuous by his scarf, is placed in the middle front box, and, in case of any tumult, is empowered to call in the military to his assistance.

We have this morning been visiting two objects, which exhibit this country in very different points of view—as abounding in wealth, or as the abode of poverty. The first is the abbey of St. Vaast, a most superb pile, now inhabited by monks of various orders, but who are preparing to quit it, in obedience to the late decrees. Nothing impresses one with a stronger idea of the influence of the Clergy, than these splendid edifices. We see them reared amidst the solitude of deserts, and in the gaiety and misery of cities; and while they cheer the one and embellish the other, they exhibit, in both, monuments of indefatigable labour and immense wealth.—The *façade* of St. Vaast is simple and striking, and the cloisters and every other part of the building are extremely handsome. The library is supposed to
be

be the finest in France, except the King's, but is now under the seal of the nation. A young monk, who was our Cicerone, told us he was sorry it was not in his power to show it. "*Et nous, Monsieur, nous sommes fâchés aussi.*" Thus, with the aid of significant looks, and gestures of disapprobation, an exchange of sentiments took place, without a single expression of treasonable import: both parties understood perfectly well, that in regretting that the library was inaccessible, each included all the circumstances which attended it.—A new church was building in a style worthy of the convent—I think, near four hundred feet long; but it was discontinued at the suppression of the religious orders, and will now, of course, never be finished.

From this abode of learned ease and pious indolence, Mr. de ——— conducted us to the Mont de Piété, a national institution for lending money to the poor on pledges, (at a moderate interest,) which, if not redeemed within a year, are sold by auction, and the overplus, if there remain any, after deducting the interest, is given to the owner of the pledge. Thousands of small packets are deposited here, which, to the eye of affluence, might seem the very refuse of

of beggary itself.—I could not reflect, without an heart-ach, on the distress of the individual, thus driven to relinquish his last covering, braving cold to satisfy hunger, and accumulating wretchedness by momentary relief. I saw, in a lower room, groupes of unfortunate beings, depriving themselves of different parts of their apparel, and watching with solicitude the arbitrary valuations; others exchanging some article of necessity for one of a still greater—some in a state of intoxication, uttering execrations of despair; and all exhibiting a picture of human nature depraved and miserable.—While I was viewing this scene, I recalled the magnificent building we had just left, and my first emotions were those of regret and censure. When we only *feel*, and have not leisure to *reflect*, we are indignant that vast sums should be expended on sumptuous edifices, and that the poor should live in vice and want: yet the erection of St. Vaast must have maintained great numbers of industrious hands; and perhaps the revenues of the abbey may not, under its new possessors, be so well employed. When the offerings and the tributes to religion are the support of the industrious poor, it is their best appropriation; and he who gives labour for a day, is a more useful benefactor than he who maintains

maintains in idleness for two.—I could not help wishing that the Mont de Pieté was suppressed, in order that the poor might no longer be tempted by the facility of a resource, which perhaps, in most instances, only increases their distress.—It is an injudicious expedient to palliate an evil, which great national works, and the encouragement of industry and manufactures, might eradicate.—With these reflections I concluded mental peace with the monks of St. Vaast, and would, had it depended upon me, have readily comprized the finishing their great church in the treaty.

In times of public commotion people frequently send their valuable effects to the Mont de Pieté, not only as being secure by its strength, but as it is respected by the people, who are interested in its preservation.—The Primary Assemblies have already taken place in this department. We happened to enter a church while the younger Robespierre was haranguing to an audience, very little respectable either in numbers or appearance. They were, however, sufficiently unanimous, and made up in noisy applause what they wanted in other respects. If the electors and elected of other departments be of the same complexion with those of Arras, the

new

new Assembly will not, in any respect, be preferable to the old one. I have reproached many of the people of this place, who, from their education and property, have a right to take an interest in the public affairs, with thus suffering themselves to be represented by the most desperate and worthless individuals of the town. Their defence is, that they are insulted and overpowered if they attend the popular meetings, and by electing "*les gueux et les scelerats pour députés*," they send them to Paris, and secure their own local tranquillity.—The first of these assertions is but too true, yet I cannot but think the second a very dangerous experiment. They remove these turbulent and needy adventurers from the direction of a club to that of government, and procure a partial relief by contributing to the general ruin.

Paris is said to be in extreme fermentation, and we are in some anxiety for our friend M. P——, who was to go there from Montmorency last week. I shall not close my letter till I have heard from him.

September 4.

I resume my pen after a sleepless night, and with an oppression of mind not to be described.

Paris

Paris is the scene of proscription and massacres. The prisoners, the clergy, the noblesse, all that are supposed inimical to public faction, or the objects of private revenge, are sacrificed without mercy. We are here in the utmost terror and consternation—we know not the end nor the extent of these horrors, and every one is anxious for himself or his friends. Our society consists mostly of females, and we do not venture out, but hover together like the fowls of heaven, when warned by a vague yet instinctive dread of the approaching storm. We tremble at the sound of voices in the street, and cry, with the agitation of Macbeth, “there’s knocking at the gate.” I do not indeed envy, but I most sincerely regret, the peace and safety of England.—I have no courage to add more, but will enclose a hasty translation of the letter we received from M. P——, by last night’s post. Humanity cannot comment upon it without shuddering.—Ever Yours, &c.

"Rue St. Honoré, Sept. 2.

"IN a moment like this, I should be easily excused a breach of promise in not writing; yet when I recollect the apprehension which the kindness of my amiable friends will feel on my account, I determine, even amidst the danger and desolation that surround me, to relieve them.—Would to heaven I had nothing more alarming to communicate than my own situation! I may indeed suffer by accident; but thousands of wretched victims are at this moment marked for sacrifice, and are massacred with an execrable imitation of rule and order: a ferocious and cruel multitude, headed by chosen assassins, are attacking the prisons, forcing the houses of the noblesse and priests, and, after a horrid mockery of judicial condemnation, execute them on the spot. The tocsin is rung, alarm guns are fired, the streets resound with fearful shrieks, and an undefinable sensation of terror seizes on one's heart. I feel that I have committed an imprudence in venturing to Paris; but the barriers are now shut, and I must abide the event. I know not to what these proscriptions tend, or if all who are not their advocates are to be their victims; but an ungovernable rage animates the people:
many

many of them have papers in their hands that seem to direct them to their objects, to whom they hurry in crouds with an eager and savage fury.—I have just been obliged to quit my pen. A cart had stopped near my lodgings, and my ears were assailed by the groans of anguish, and the shouts of frantic exultation. Unknowing whether to descend or remain, I, after a moment's deliberation, concluded it would be better to have shown myself than to have appeared to avoid it, in case the people should enter the house, and therefore went down with the best show of courage I could assume.—I will draw a veil over the scene that presented itself—nature revolts, and my fair friends would shudder at the detail. Suffice it to say, that I saw carts, loaded with the dead and dying, and driven by their yet ensanguined murderers, one of whom, in a tone of exultation, cried, “Here is a glorious day for France!” I endeavoured to assent, though with a faltering voice, and as soon as they were passed escaped to my room. You may imagine I shall not easily recover the shock I received.—At this moment they cry, the enemy are retreating from Verdun. At any other time this would have been desirable, but at present one knows not what to wish for. Most probably, the report is only spread with the humane

humane hope of appeasing the mob. They have already twice attacked the Temple; and I tremble lest this asylum of fallen majesty should, ere morning, be violated.

“Adieu—I know not if the courier will be permitted to depart; but, as I believe the streets are not more unsafe than the houses, I shall make an attempt to send this. I will write again in a few days. If to-morrow should prove calm, I shall be engaged in enquiring after the fate of my friends.—I beg my respects to Monf. and Mad. de —; and entreat you all to be as tranquil as such circumstances will permit.—You may be certain of hearing any news that can give you pleasure immediately. I have the honour to be,” &c. &c.

Arras, September.

YOU will in future, I believe, find me but a dull correspondent. The natural timidity of my disposition, added to the dread which a native of England has of any violation of domestic security, renders me unfit for the scenes I am engaged in. I am become stupid and melancholy, and my letters will partake of the oppression of my mind.

At Paris, the massacres at the prisons are now over, but those in the streets and in private houses still continue. Scarcely a post arrives that does not inform M. de — of some friend or acquaintance being sacrificed. Heaven knows where this is to end!

We had, for two days, notice that, pursuant to a decree of the Assembly, commissioners were expected here at night, and that the tocsin would be rung for every body to deliver up their arms. We did not dare go to bed on either of these nights, but merely lay down in our *robes de chambre*, without attempting to sleep. This dreaded business is, however, past. Parties of the Jacobins paraded the streets yesterday morning, and disarmed all they thought proper. I observed they had lists in their hands, and only went to such houses as have an external appearance of property. Mr. de —, who has been in the service thirty years, delivered his arms to a boy, who behaved to him with the utmost insolence, whilst we sat trembling and almost senseless with fear the whole time they remained in the house; and could I give you an idea of their appearance, you would think my terror very justifiable. It is, indeed, strange and alarming, that all who have property should
be

be deprived of the means of defending either that or their lives, at a moment when Paris is giving an example of tumult and assassination to every other part of the kingdom. Knowing no good reason for such a procedure, it is very natural to suspect a bad one.—I think, on many accounts, we are more exposed here than at —, and as soon as we can procure horses we shall depart.—The following is the translation of our last letter from Mr. P——.

“ I PROMISED my kind friends to write as soon as I should have any thing satisfactory to communicate: but, alas! I have no hope of being the harbinger of any thing but circumstances of a very different tendency. I can only give you details of the horrors I have already generally described. Carnage has not yet ceased; and is only become more cool and more discriminating. All the mild characteristics that distinguish man from the wild beasts seem annihilated; and a frantic cruelty, which is dignified with the name of patriotism, has usurped every faculty, and banished both reason and mercy.

“ Monsr. —, whom I have hitherto known by reputation, as an upright, and even humane

man, had a brother shut up, with a number of other priests, at the Carmes; and, by his situation and connections, he has such influence as might, if exerted, have preserved the latter. The unfortunate brother knowing this, found means, while hourly expecting his fate, to convey a note to Mr. —, begging he would immediately release, and procure him an asylum. The messenger returned with an answer, that Monf. — had no relations in the enemies of his country!

“A few hours after the massacres at the Carmes took place.—One Panis,* who is in the *Comité de Surveillance*, had, a few days previous to these dreadful events, become, I know not on what occasion, the depositary of a large sum of money belonging to a gentleman of his section. A secret and frivolous denunciation was made the pretext for throwing the owner of the money into prison, where he remained till September, when his friends recollecting his danger, flew to the committee and applied for his discharge. Unfortunately, the only mem-

* Panis has since figured on various occasions. He is a member of the Convention, and was openly accused of having been an accomplice in the robbery of the Garde Meuble.

ber of the committee present was Panis. He promised to take measures for an immediate release.—Perhaps he kept his word, but the release was cruel and final—the prison was attacked, and the victim heard of no more.—You will not be surprized at such occurrences, when I tell you that G——,* whom you must remember to have heard of as a Jacobin at ——, is President of the committee above mentioned—yes, an assassin is now the protector of the public safety, and the commune of Paris the patron of a criminal who has merited the gibbet.—I know not if we are yet arrived at

* G—— was afterwards elected (doubtless by a recommendation of the Jacobins) Deputy for the department of Finisterre, to which he was sent Commissioner by the Convention. On account of some unwarrantable proceedings, and of some words that escaped him, which gave rise to a suspicion that he was privy to the robbery of the Garde Meuble, he was arrested by the municipality of Quimper Corentin, of which place he is a native. The Jacobins applied for his discharge, and for the punishment of the municipality; but the Convention, who at that time rarely took any decisive measures, ordered G—— to be liberated, but evaded the other part of the petition which tended to revenge him. The affair of the Garde Meuble was, however, again brought forward; but, most probably, many of the members had reasons for not discussing too nearly the accusation against G——; and those who were not interested in suppressing it, were too weak or too timid to pursue it farther.

the climax of woe and iniquity, but Brissot, Condorcet, Roland, &c. and all those whose principles you have reprobated as violent and dangerous, will now form the moderate side of the Assembly. Perhaps even those who are now the party most dreaded, may one day give place to yet more desperate leaders, and become in their turn our best alternative. What will then be the situation of France? Who can reflect without trembling at the prospect?—It is not yet safe to walk the streets decently dressed; and I have been obliged to supply myself with trowsers, a jacket, coloured neck-cloths, and coarse linen, which I take care to soil before I venture out.

“ The Agrarian law is now the moral of Paris, and I had nearly lost my life yesterday by tearing a placard written in support of it. I did it imprudently, not supposing I was observed; and had not some people, known as Jacobins, come up and interfered in my behalf, the consequence might have been fatal.—It would be difficult, and even impossible, to attempt a description of the manners of the people of Paris at this moment: the licentiousness common to great cities is decency compared with what prevails in this; it has features of a peculiar

culiar and striking description, and the general expression is that of a monstrous union of opposite vices. Alternately dissolute and cruel, gay and vindictive, the Parisian vaunts amidst debauchery the triumph of assassination, and enlivens his midnight orgies by recounting the sufferings of the massacred aristocrats: women, whose profession it is to please, assume the *bonnet rouge*,* and affect, as a means of seduction, an intrepid and ferocious courage.—I cannot yet learn if Monf. S——'s sister be alive; her situation about the Queen makes it too doubtful; but endeavour to give him hope—many may have escaped whose fears still detain them in concealment. People of the first rank now inhabit garrets and cellars, and those who appear are disguised beyond recollection; so that I do not despair of the safety of some, who are now thought to have perished.—I am, as you may suppose, in haste to leave this place, and I hope to return to Montmorency tomorrow; but every body is soliciting passports. The Hotel de Ville is besieged, and I have already attended two days without success.—I beg my respectful homage to Monsieur and Madame de ——; and I have the honour to

* Red cap.

be, with esteem, the affectionate servant of my friends in general.

“ L——.”

You will read Monf. L——’s letter with all the grief and indignation we have already felt, and I will make no comment on it, but to give you a slight sketch of the history of G——, whom he mentions as being President of the Committee of Surveillance.—In the absence of a man, whom he called his friend, he seduced his wife, and eloped with her: the husband overtook them, and fell in the dispute which ensued, when G——, to avoid being taken by the officers of justice, abandoned his companion to her fate, and escaped alone. After a variety of adventures, he at length enlisted himself as a grenadier in the regiment of Dillon. With much assurance, and talents cultivated above the situation in which he appeared, he became popular amongst his fellow-soldiers, and the military impunity, which is one effect of the revolution, cast a veil over his former guilt, or rather indeed enabled him to defy the punishment annexed to it. When the regiment was quartered at ——, he frequented and harangued at the Jacobin club, perverted the minds of the soldiers by seditious addresses, till at length he was deemed
qualified

qualified to quit the character of a subordinate incendiary, and figure amongst the assassins at Paris. He had hitherto, I believe, acted without pay, for he was deeply in debt, and without money or clothes; but a few days previous to the tenth of August, a leader of the Jacobins supplied him with both, paid his debts, procured his discharge, and sent him to Paris. What intermediate gradations he may have passed through, I know not; but it is not difficult to imagine the services that have advanced him to his present situation.—It would be unsafe to risk this letter by the post, and I close it hastily to avail myself of a present conveyance.—I remain, Yours, &c.

Arras, September.

THE camp of Maulde is broken up, and we deferred our journey, that we might pass a day at Douay with M. de ——'s son.—The road within some miles of that place is covered with corn and forage, the immediate environs are begun to be inundated, and every thing wears the appearance of impending hostility. The town is so full of troops, that without the interest of our military friends we should scarcely have

have procured a lodging. All was bustle and confusion, the enemy are very near, and the French are preparing to form a camp under the walls. Amidst all this, we found it difficult to satisfy our curiosity in viewing the churches and pictures: some of the former are shut, and the latter concealed; we therefore contented ourselves with seeing the principal ones.—The town house is a very handsome building, where the Parliament was holden previous to the revolution, and where all the business of the department of the North is now transacted.—In the council chamber, which is very elegantly carved, was also a picture of the present King. They were, at the very moment of our entrance, in the act of displacing it. We asked the reason, and were told it was to be cut in pieces, and portions sent to the different popular societies.—I know not if our features betrayed the indignation we feared to express, but the man who seemed to have directed this disposal of the portrait, told us we were not English if we saw it with regret. I was not much delighted with such a compliment to our country, and was glad to escape without farther comment.

The manners of the people seem every where much changed, and are becoming gross and inhuman.

inhuman. While we were walking on the ramparts, I happened to have occasion to take down an address, and with the paper and pencil in my hand turned out of the direct path to observe a chapel on one side of it. In a moment I was alarmed by the cries of my companions, and beheld the musquet of the centinel pointed at me, and M. de ——— expostulating with him. I am not certain if he supposed I was taking a plan of the fortifications, and meant really more than a threat; but I was sufficiently frightened, and shall not again approach a town wall with pencils and paper.

M. de ——— is one of the only six officers of his regiment who have not emigrated. With an imagination heated by the works of modern philosophers into an enthusiastic love of republican governments, and irritated by the contempt and opposition he has met with from those of his own class who entertain different principles, he is now become almost a fanatic. What at first was only a political opinion is now a religious tenet; and the moderate sectary has acquired the obstinacy of a martyr, and, perhaps, the spirit of persecution. At the beginning of the revolution, the necessity of deciding, a youthful ardour for liberty, and the
desire

desire of preserving his fortune, probably determined him to become a patriot; and pride and resentment have given stability to notions which might otherwise have fluctuated with circumstances, or yielded to time. This is but too generally the case: the friends of rational reform, and the supporters of the ancient monarchy, have too deeply offended each other for pardon or confidence; and the country perhaps will be sacrificed by the mutual desertions of those most concerned in its preservation. Actuated only by selfishness and revenge, each party willingly consents to the ruin of its opponents. The clergy, already divided among themselves, are abandoned by the noblesse—the noblesse are persecuted by the commercial interest—and, in short, the only union is amongst the Jacobins; that is, amongst a few weak persons who are deceived, and a banditti who betray and profit by their *patriotism*.

I was led to these reflections by my conversation with Mr. de L—— and his companions. I believe they do not approve of the present extremes, yet they expressed themselves with the utmost virulence against the aristocrats, and would hear neither of reconciliation nor palliation. On the other hand, these dispositions
were

were not altogether unprovoked—the young men had been persecuted by their relations, and banished the society of their acquaintance; and their political opinions had acted as an universal proscription. There were even some against whom the doors of the parental roof were shut.—These party violences are terrible; and I was happy to perceive that the reciprocal claims of duty and affection were not diminished by them, either in M. de —, or his son. He, however, at first refused to come to A—, because he suspected the patriotism of our society. I pleaded, as an inducement, the beauty of Mad. G—, but he told me she was an aristocrat. It was at length, however, determined, that he should dine with us last Sunday, and that all visitors should be excluded. He was prevented coming by being ordered out with a party the day we left him; and he has written to us in high spirits, to say, that, besides fulfilling his object, he had returned with fifty prisoners.

We had a very narrow escape in coming home—the Hulus were at the village of —, an hour after we passed through it, and treated the poor inhabitants, as they usually do, with great inhumanity.—Nothing has alienated the
minds

minds of the people so much as the cruelties of these troops—they plunder and ill treat all they encounter; and their avarice is even less insatiable than their barbarity. How hard is it, that the ambition of Chiefs, and the wickedness of faction, should thus fall upon the innocent cottager, who perhaps is equally a stranger to the names of the one, and the principles of the other!

The public papers will now inform you, that the French are at liberty to obtain a divorce on almost any pretext, or even on no pretext at all, except what many may think a very good one—mutual agreement. A lady of our acquaintance here is become a republican in consequence of the decree, and probably will very soon avail herself of it; but this conduct, I conceive, will not be very general.

Much has been said of the gallantry of the French ladies, and not entirely without reason: yet, though sometimes inconstant wives, they are, for the most part, faithful friends—they sacrifice the husband without forsaking him, and their common interest is always promoted with as much zeal as the most inviolable attachment could inspire. Mad. de C——, whom
we

we often meet in company, is the wife of an emigrant, and is said not to be absolutely disconsolate at his absence; yet she is indefatigable in her efforts to supply him with money: she even risks her safety by her sollicitude, and has just now prevailed on her favourite admirer to hasten his departure for the frontiers, in order to convey a sum she has with much difficulty been raising. Such instances are, I believe, not very rare; and as a Frenchman usually prefers his interest to every thing else, and is not quite so unaccommodating as an Englishman, an amicable arrangement takes place, and one seldom hears of a separation.

The inhabitants of Arras, with all their patriotism, are extremely averse from the assignats; and it is with great reluctance that they consent to receive them at two-thirds of their nominal value. This discredit of the paper money has been now two months at a stand, and its rise or fall will be determined by the success of the campaign.—I bid you adieu for the last time from hence. We have already exceeded the proposed length of our visit, and shall set out for St. Omer to-morrow. Yours.

St. Omer, September.

I Am confined to my room by a slight indisposition, and, instead of accompanying my friends, have taken up my pen to inform you that we are thus far safe on our journey.—Do not, because you are surrounded by a protecting element, smile at the idea of travelling forty or fifty miles in safety. The light troops of the Austrian army penetrate so far, that none of the roads on the frontier are entirely free from danger. My female companions were alarmed the whole day—the young for their baggage, and the old for themselves.

The country between this and Arras has the appearance of a garden cultivated for the common use of its inhabitants, and has all the fertility and beauty of which a flat surface is susceptible. Bethune and Aire I should suppose strongly fortified. I did not fail, in passing through the former, to recollect with veneration the faithful minister of Henry the Fourth. The misfortunes of the descendant of Henry, whom Sully* loved, and the state of the kingdom he so much cherished, made a stronger impression on me than usual, and I

* Maximilian de Bethune, Duc de Sully.

mingled

mingled with the tribute of respect a sentiment of indignation. What perverse and malignant influence can have excited the people either to incur or to suffer their present situation? Were we not well acquainted with the arts of factions, the activity of bad men, and the effect of their union, I should be almost tempted to believe this change in the French supernatural. Less than three years ago, the name of Henri Quatre was not uttered without enthusiasm. The piece that transmitted the slightest anecdotes of his life was certain of success—the air that celebrated him was listened to with delight—and the decorations of beauty, when associated with the idea of this gallant Monarch, became more irresistible.* Yet Henry the Fourth is now a tyrant—his pictures and statues are destroyed, and his memory execrated!—Those who have reduced the French to this are, doubtless, base and designing intriguers; yet I cannot acquit the people, who are thus wrought on, of unfeelingness and levity.—England has had its revolutions; but the names of Henry the Fifth and Elizabeth were still revered: and the regal

* At this time it was the prevailing fashion to call any new inventions of female dress after his name, and to decorate the ornamental parts of furniture with his resemblance.

monuments, which still exist, after all the vicissitudes of our political principles, attest the mildness of the English republicans.

The last days of our stay at Arras were embittered by the distress of our neighbour and acquaintance, Madame de B——. She has lost two sons under circumstances so affecting, that I think you will be interested in the relation.—The two young men were in the army, and quartered at Perpignan, at a time when some effort of counter-revolution was said to be intended. One of them was arrested as being concerned, and the other surrendered himself prisoner to accompany his brother.—When the High Court at Orleans was instituted for trying state-prisoners, those of Perpignan were ordered to be conducted there, and the two B——'s, chained together, were taken with the rest. On their arrival at Orleans, their gaoler had mislaid the key that unlocked their fetters, and, not finding it immediately, the young men produced one, which answered the purpose, and released themselves. The gaoler looked at them with surprize, and asked why, with such a means in their power, they had not escaped in the night, or on the road. They replied, because they were not culpable, and
had

had no reason for avoiding a trial that would manifest their innocence. Their heroism was fatal. They were brought, by a decree of the Convention, from Orleans to Versailles, (on their way to Paris,) where they were met by the mob, and massacred. Their unfortunate mother is yet ignorant of their fate; but we left her in a state little preferable to that which will be the effect of certainty. She saw the decree for transporting the prisoners from Orleans, and all accounts of the result have been carefully concealed from her; yet her anxious and enquiring looks at all who approach her indicate but too well her suspicion of the truth.—Mons. de ——'s situation is indescribably painful. Informed of the death of his sons, he is yet obliged to conceal his sufferings, and wear an appearance of tranquillity in the presence of his wife. Sometimes he escapes, when unable to contain his emotions any longer, and remains at M. de ——'s till he recovers himself. He takes no notice of the subject of his grief, and we respect it too much to attempt to console him. The last time I asked him after Mad. de ——, he told me her spirits were something better, and, added he, in a voice almost suffocated, “She is amusing herself with working neckcloths for her sons!”—When you reflect

that the massacres at Paris took place the second and third of September, and that the decree was passed to bring the prisoners from Orleans (where they were in safety) on the tenth, I can say nothing that will add to the horror of this transaction, or to your detestation of its cause. Sixty-two, mostly people of high rank, fell victims to this barbarous policy: they were brought in a sort of covered waggons, and were murdered in heaps without being taken out.*

* Perhaps the reader will be pleased at a discovery, which it would have been unsafe to mention when made, or in the course of this correspondence. The two young men here alluded to arrived at Versailles, chained together, with their fellow-prisoners. Surprise, perhaps admiration, had diverted the gaoler's attention from demanding the key that opened their padlock, and it was still in their possession. On entering Versailles, and observing the croud preparing to attack them, they divested themselves of their fetters, and of every other incumbrance. In a few moments their carriages were surrounded, their companions at one end were already murdered, and themselves slightly wounded; but the confusion increasing, they darted amidst the croud, and were in a moment undistinguishable. They were afterwards taken under the protection of an humane magistrate, who concealed them for some time, and they are now in perfect security. They were the only two of the whole number that escaped.

September.

WE passed a country so barren and uninteresting yesterday, that even a professional traveller could not have made a single page of it. It was, in every thing, a perfect contrast to the rich plains of Artois—unfertile, neglected valleys and hills, miserable farms, still more miserable cottages, and scarcely any appearance of population. The only place where we could refresh the horses was a small house, over the door of which was the pompous designation of Hotel d'Angleterre. I know not if this be intended as a ridicule on our country, or as an attraction to our countrymen, but I, however, found something besides the appellation which reminded me of England, and which one does not often find in houses of a better outside; for though the rooms were small, and only two in number, they were very clean, and the hostess was neat and civil. The Hotel d'Angleterre, indeed, was not luxuriously supplied, and the whole of our repast was eggs and tea, which we had brought with us.—In the next room to that we occupied were two prisoners chained, whom the officers were conveying to Arras, for the purpose of better security. The secret history of this business is worth relating, as it marks

the character of the moment, and the ascendancy which the Jacobins are daily acquiring.

These men were apprehended as smugglers, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, and committed to the gaol at ———. A few days after, a young girl, of bad character, who has much influence at the club, made a motion, that the people, in a body, should demand the release of the prisoners. The motion was carried, and the Hotel de Ville assailed by a formidable troop of sailors, fish-women, &c.—The municipality refused to comply, the Garde Nationale was called out, and, on the mob persisting, fired over their heads, wounded a few, and the rest dispersed of themselves.—Now you must understand, the latent motive of all this was two thousand livres promised to one of the Jacobin leaders, if he succeeded in procuring the men their liberty.—I do not advance this merely on conjecture. The fact is well known to the municipality, and the decent part of it would willingly have expelled this man, who is one of their members, but that they found themselves too weak to engage in a serious quarrel with the Jacobins.—One cannot reflect, without apprehension, that any society should exist which can oppose the execution of the laws with

with impunity, or that a people, who are little sensible of realities, should be thus abused by names. They suffer, with unfeeling patience, a thousand enormities—yet blindly risk their liberties and lives to promote the designs of an adventurer, because he harangues at a club, and calls himself a patriot.—I have just received advice that my friends have left Lausanne, and are on their way to Paris. Our first plan of passing the winter there will be imprudent, if not impracticable, and we have concluded to take a house for the winter six months at Amiens, Chantilly, or some place which has the reputation of being quiet. I have already ordered enquiries to be made, and shall set out with Mrs. — in a day or two for Amiens. I may, perhaps, not write till our return; but shall not cease to be, with great truth, Yours, &c.

Amiens.

THE departement de la Somme has the reputation of being a little aristocratic. I know not how far this be merited, but the people are certainly not enthusiasts. The villages we passed on our road hither were very different from those

on the frontiers—we were hailed by no popular sounds, no cries of *Vive la nation!* except from here and there some ragged boy in a red cap, who, from habit, associated this salutation with the appearance of a carriage. In every place where there are half a dozen houses is planted an unthriving tree of liberty, which seems to wither under the baneful influence of the *bannet rouge*. This Jacobin attribute is made of materials to resist the weather, and may last some time; but the trees of liberty, being planted unseasonably, are already dead. I hope this will not prove emblematic, and that the power of the Jacobins may not outlive the freedom of the people.

The Convention begin their labours under disagreeable auspices. A general terror seems to have seized on the Parisians, the roads are covered with carriages, and the inns filled with travellers. A new regulation has just taken place, apparently intended to check this restless spirit. At Abbeville, though we arrived late and were fatigued, we were taken to the municipality, our passports *collated* with our persons, and at the inn we were obliged to insert in a book our names, the place of our birth, from

from whence we came, and where we were going. This, you will say, has more the features of a mature Inquisition, than a new-born Republic; but the French have different notions of liberty from yours, and take these things very quietly.—At Flixecourt we eat out of pewter spoons, and the people told us, with much inquietude, that they had sold their plate, in expectation of a decree of the Convention to take it from them. This decree, however, has not passed, but the alarm is universal, and does not imply any great confidence in the new government.

I have had much difficulty in executing my commission, and have at last fixed upon a house, of which I fear my friends will not approve; but the panic which depopulates Paris, the bombardment of Lille, and the tranquillity which has hitherto prevailed here, has filled the town, and rendered every kind of habitation scarce, and extravagantly dear: for you must remark, that though the *Amienois* are all aristocrats, yet when an intimidated sufferer of the same party flies from Paris, and seeks an asylum amongst them, they calculate with much exactitude what they suppose necessity may compel him to give, and will not take a livre less.—The rent of houses and lodgings, like the national funds,
rise

rise and fall with the public distresses, and, like them, is an object of speculation: several persons to whom we were addressed were extremely indifferent about letting their houses, alledging as a reason, that if the disorders of Paris should increase, they had no doubt of letting them to much greater advantage.

We were at the theatre last night—it was opened for the first time since France has been declared a republic, and the Jacobins vociferated loudly to have the *fleur de lys*, and other regal emblems, effaced. Obedience was no sooner promised to this command, than it was succeeded by another not quite so easily complied with—they insisted on having the Marfellois Hymn sung. In vain did the manager, with a ludicrous sort of terror, declare, that there were none of his company who had any voice, or who knew either the words or the music of the hymn in question. “*C’est égal, il faut chanter,*” resounded from all the patriots in the house. At last, finding the thing impossible, they agreed to a compromise; and one of the actors promised to sing it on the morrow, as well as the trifling impediment of having no voice would permit him. You think your galleries despotic when they call for an epilogue
that

that is forgotten, and the actresses who should speak it is undrest; or when they insist upon enlivening the last acts of Jane Shore with Roast Beef! What would you think if they would not dispense with a hornpipe on the tight-rope by Mrs. Webb? Yet, bating the danger, I assure you, the audience of Amiens was equally unreasonable. But liberty at present seems to be in an undefined state; and until our rulers shall have determined what it is, the matter will continue to be settled as it is now—by each man usurping as large a portion of tyranny as his situation will admit of. He who submits without repining to his district, to his municipality, or even to the club, domineers at the theatre, or exercises in the street a manual censure on aristocratic apparel.*

Our embarrassment for small change is renewed: many of the communes who had issued bills of five, ten, and fifteen sols, repayable in assignats, are become bankrupts, which circumstance has thrown such a discredit on all this kind of nominal money, that the bills of one town will

* It was common at this time to insult women in the streets if dressed too well, or in colours the people chose to call aristocratic. I was myself nearly thrown down for having on a straw bonnet with green ribbons.

not pass at another. The original creation of these bills was so limited, that no town had half the number requisite for the circulation of its neighbourhood; and this decrease, with the distrust that arises from the occasion of it, greatly adds to the general inconvenience.

The retreat of the Prussian army excites more surprize than interest, and the people talk of it with as much indifference as they would of an event that had happened beyond the Ganges. The siege of Lisle takes off all attention from the relief of Thionville—not on account of its importance but on account of its novelty.—
I remain, Yours, &c.

September.

WE left Amiens early yesterday morning, but were so much delayed by the number of volunteers on the road, that it was late before we reached Abbeville. I was at first somewhat alarmed at finding ourselves surrounded by so formidable a *cortege*; they however only exacted a declaration of our political principles, and we purchased our safety by a few smiles, and exclamations of *Vive la nation!* There were some hundreds of these recruits much under twenty; but

but the poor fellows, exhilarated by their new uniform and large pay, were going gaily to decide their fate by that hazard which puts youth and age on a level, and scatters with indiscriminating hand the cypress and the laurel.

At Abbeville all the former precautions were renewed—we underwent another solemn identification of our persons at the Hotel de Ville, and an abstract of our history was again enregistered at the inn. One would really suppose that the town was under apprehensions of a siege, or, at least, of the plague. My “paper face” was examined as suspiciously as though I had had the appearance of a *travestied* Achilles; and M——’s, which has as little expression as a Chinese painting, was elaborately scrutinized by a Dogberry in spectacles, who, perhaps, fancied she had the features of a female Machiavel. All this was done with an air of importance sufficiently ludicrous, when contrasted with the object; but we met with no incivility, and had nothing to complain of but a little additional fatigue, and the delay of our dinner.

We stopped to change horses at Bernay, and I soon perceived our landlady was a very ardent patriot. In a room, to which we waded
at

at great risk of our clothes, was a representation of the siege of the Bastille, and prints of half a dozen American Generals, headed by Mr. Thomas Paine. On descending we found our hostess exhibiting a still more forcible picture of curiosity than Shakspeare's blacksmith. The half-demolished repast was cooling on the table, whilst our postilion retailed the Gazette, and the pigs and ducks were amicably grazing together on whatever the kitchen produced. The affairs of the Prussians and Austrians were discussed with entire unanimity, but when these politicians, as is often the case, came to adjust their own particular account, the conference was much less harmonious. The postilion offered a ten sols billet, which the landlady refused: one persisted in its validity, the other in rejecting it—till, at last, the patriotism of neither could endure this proof, and peace was concluded by a joint execration of those who invented this "*fichu papier*."

At —— we met our friend, Mad. de ——, with part of her family and an immense quantity of baggage. I was both surprized and alarmed at such an apparition, and found, on enquiry, that they thought themselves unsafe at Arras, and were going to reside near M. de ——'s estate,

estate, where they were better known. I really begin to doubt the prudence of our establishing ourselves here for the winter. Every one who has it in his power endeavours to emigrate, even those who till now have been zealous supporters of the revolution.—Distrust and apprehension seem to have taken possession of every mind. Those who are in towns fly to the country, while the inhabitant of the isolated chateau takes refuge in the neighbouring town. Flocks of both aristocrats and patriots are trembling and fluttering at the foreboding storm, yet prefer to abide its fury, rather than seek shelter and defence together. I, however, flatter myself, that the new government will not justify this fear; and as I am certain my friends will not return to England at this season, I shall not endeavour to intimidate or discourage them from their present arrangement. We shall, at least, be enabled to form some idea of a republican constitution, and I do not, on reflection, conceive that any possible harm can happen to us.

I SHALL

October!

I Shall not date from this place again, intending to quit it as soon as possible. It is disturbed by the crouds from the camps, which are broken up, and the soldiers are extremely brutal and insolent. So much are the people already familiarized with the unnatural depravity of manners that begins to prevall, that the wife of the Colonel of a battalion now here walks the streets in a red cap, with pistols at her girdle, boasting of the numbers she has destroyed at the massacres in August and September.

The Convention talk of the King's trial as a decided measure; yet no one seems to admit even the possibility that such an act can be ever intended. A few believe him culpable, many think him misled, and many acquit him totally: but *all* agree that any violation of his person would be an atrocity disgraceful to the nation at large.—The fate of Princes is often disastrous in proportion to their virtues. The vanity, selfishness, and bigotry of Louis the Fourteenth were flattered while he lived, and procured him the appellation of Great after his death. The greatest military talents that France has given birth to seemed created to earn laurels,
not

not for themselves, but for the brow of that vain-glorious Monarch. Industry and Science toiled but for his gratification, and Genius, forgetting its dignity, willingly received from his award the fame it has since bestowed.—Louis the Fifteenth, who corrupted the people by his example, and ruined them by his expence, knew no diminution of the loyalty, whatever he might of the affection, of his people, and ended his days in the practice of the same vices, and surrounded by the same luxury, in which he had passed them.—Louis the Sixteenth, to whom scarcely his enemies ascribe any vices, for its outrages against whom faction finds no excuse but in the facility of his nature—whose devotion is at once exemplary and tolerant—who, in an age of licentiousness, is remarkable for the simplicity of his manners—whose amusements were liberal or inoffensive—and whose concessions to his people form a striking contrast with the exactions of his predecessors—Yes, the Monarch I have been describing, and, I think, not partially, has been overwhelmed with sorrow and indignities—his person has been degraded, that he might be despoiled of his crown, and perhaps the sacrifice of his crown may be followed by that of his life.—When we thus see the punishment of guilt

accumulated on the head of him who has not participated in it, and vice triumph in the security that should seem the lot of innocence, we can only adduce new motives to fortify ourselves in this great truth of our religion—that the chastisement of the one, and reward of the other, must be looked for beyond the inflictions or enjoyments of our present existence.—I do not often moralize on paper, but there are moments when one derives one's best consolation from so moralizing; and this easy and simple justification of Providence, which refers all that appears inconsistent here to the retribution of a future state, is pointed out less as the duty than the happiness of mankind. This single argument of religion solves every difficulty, and leaves the mind in fortitude and peace; whilst the pride of sceptical philosophy traces whole volumes, only to establish the doubts, and nourish the despair of its disciples.—Adieu. I cannot conclude better than with these reflections, at a time when disbelief is something too fashionable even amongst our countrymen.—Yours, &c.

I ARRIVED

Amiens, October.

I Arrived here the day on which a ball was given to celebrate the return of the volunteers who had gone to the assistance of Lisle.* The French, indeed, never refuse to rejoice when they are ordered; but as these festivities are not spontaneous effusions, but official ordi-

* The bombardment of Lisle commenced on the twenty-ninth of September, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and continued, almost without interruption, until the sixth of October. Many of the public buildings, and whole quarters of the town, were so much damaged or destroyed, that the situation of the streets were scarcely distinguishable. The houses which the fire obliged their inhabitants to abandon, were pillaged by barbarians, more merciless than the Austrians themselves. Yet, amidst these accumulated horrors, the *Lillois* not only preserved their courage, but their presence of mind: the rich incited and encouraged the poor; those who were unable to assist with their labour, rewarded with their wealth: the men were employed in endeavouring to extinguish the fire of the buildings, or in preserving their effects; while women and children snatched the opportunity of extinguishing the fuzes of the bombs as soon as they fell, at which they became very daring and dexterous. During the whole of this dreadful period, not one murmur, not one proposition to surrender, was heard from any party. The Convention decreed, amidst the wildest enthusiasm of applause, that Lisle had deserved well of the country. Forty-two thousand five hundred balls were fired, and the damages were estimated at forty millions of livres.

nances, and regulated with the same method as a tax or a *recruitment*, they are of course languid and uninteresting. The whole of their hilarity seems to consist in the movement of the dance, in which they are by no means animated; and I have seen, even among the common people, a cotillion performed as gravely and as mechanically as the ceremonies of a Chinese court.—I have always thought, with Sterne, that we were mistaken in supposing the French a gay nation. It is true, they laugh much, have great gesticulation, and are extravagantly fond of dancing: but the laugh is the effect of habit, and not of a risible sensation; the gesture is not the agitation of the mind operating upon the body, but constitutional volatility; and their love of dancing is merely the effect of a happy climate, (which, though mild, does not enervate,) and that love of action which usually accompanies mental vacancy, when it is not counteracted by heat, or other physical causes.

I know such an opinion, if publicly avowed, would be combated as false and singular; yet I appeal to those who have at all studied the French character, not as travellers, but by a residence amongst them, for the support of my opinion. Every one who understands the language,

guage, and has mixed much in society, must have made the same observations.—See two Frenchmen at a distance, and the vehemence of their action, and the expression of their features shall make you conclude they are discussing some subject, which not only interests, but delights them. Enquire, and you will find they were talking of the weather, or the price of a waistcoat!—In England you would be tempted to call in a peace-officer at the loud tone and menacing attitudes with which two people here very amicably adjust a bargain for five livres.—In short, we mistake *that* for a mental quality which, in fact, is but a corporeal one; and, though the French may have many good and agreeable points of character, I do not include gaiety among the number.

I doubt much if my friends will approve of their habitation. I confess I am by no means satisfied with it myself; and, with regard to pecuniary considerations, my engagement is not an advantageous one.—Madame Dorval, of whom I have taken the house, is a character very common in France, and over which I was little calculated to have the ascendant. Officially polite in her manners, and inflexibly attentive to her interest, she seemingly acquiesces

in every thing you propose. You would even fancy she was solicitous to serve you; yet, after a thousand gracious sentiments, and as many implied eulogiums on her liberality and generosity, you find her return, with unrelenting perseverance, to some paltry proposition, by which she is to gain a few livres; and all this so civilly, so sentimentally, and so determinedly, that you find yourself obliged to yield, and are duped without being deceived.

The lower class have here, as well as on your side of the water, the custom of attributing to Ministers and Governments some connection with, or controul over, the operations of nature. I remarked to a woman who brings me fruit, that the grapes were bad and dear this year—*Ab! mon dieu oui, ils ne murissent pas. Il me semble que tout va mal depuis qu'on a inventé la nation.*

I cannot, like the imitators of Sterne, translate a chapter of sentiment from every incident that occurs, or from every physiognomy I encounter; yet, in circumstances like the present, the mind, not usually observing, is tempted to comment.—I was in a milliner's shop to-day; and took notice that, on my entering, she was,
whilst

whilst at her work, learning the Marseillois Hymn.* Before I had concluded my purchase, an officer came in to prepare her for the reception of four volunteers, whom she was to lodge the two ensuing nights. She assented, indeed, very graciously, (for a French woman never loses the command of her features,) but a moment after, the Marseillois, which lay on the counter, was thrown aside in a pet, and I dare say she will not resume her patriotic taste, nor be reconciled to the revolution, until some days after the volunteers shall have changed their quarters.

This quartering of troops in private houses appears to me the most grievous and impolitic of all taxes: it adds embarrassment to expence, invades domestic comfort, and conveys such an idea of military subjection, that I wonder any people ever submits to it, or any government ever ventures to impose it.

I know not if the English are conscious of their own importance at this moment, but it is certain they are the centre of the hopes and fears of all parties, I might say of all Europe.

* A patriotic air, at this time highly popular.

The aristocrats wait with anxiety and solicitude a declaration of war, whilst their opponents regard such an event as pregnant with distress, and even as the signal of their ruin. The body of the people of both parties are averse from increasing the number of their enemies; but as the Convention may be directed by other motives than the public wish, it is impossible to form any conclusion on the subject. I am, of course, desirous of peace, and should be so from selfishness, if I were not from philanthropy, as a cessation of it at this time would disconcert all our plans, and oblige us to seek refuge at ———, which has just all that is necessary for our happiness, except what is most desirable—a mild and dry atmosphere. Yours, &c.

Amiens, November.

THE arrival of my friends has occasioned a short suspension of my correspondence; but though I have been negligent, I assure you, my dear brother, I have not been forgetful; and this temporary preference of the ties of friendship to those of nature, will be excused, when you consider our long separation.

My

My intimacy with Mrs. D—— began when I first came to this country, and at every subsequent visit to the continent it has been renewed and increased into that rational kind of attachment, which your sex seldom allow in ours, though you yourselves do not abound in examples of it. Mrs. D—— is one of those characters which are oftener loved than admired—more agreeable than handsome—good-natured, humane, and unassuming—and with no mental pretensions beyond common sense tolerably well cultivated. The shades of this portraiture are an extreme of delicacy, bordering on fastidiousness—a trifle of *hauteur*, not in manners, but disposition—and, perhaps, a tincture of affectation. These foibles are, however, in a great degree, constitutional: she is more an invalid than myself; and ill health naturally increases irritability, and renders the mind less disposed to bear with inconveniencies: one avoids company at first, through a sense of one's infirmities, till this timidity becomes habitual, and settles almost into aversion.—The valetudinarian, who is obliged to fly the world, in time fancies herself above it, and ends by supposing there is some superiority in differing from other people. Mr. D—— is one of the best men existing—well bred and well informed;

formed; yet, without its appearing to the common observer, he is of a very singular and original turn of mind. He is most exceedingly nervous, and this effect of his physical construction has rendered him so susceptible, that he is continually agitated and hurt by circumstances which others pass by unnoticed. In other respects he is a great lover of exercise, fond of domestic life, reads much, and has an aversion from bustle of all kind.

The banishment of the Priests, which in many instances was attended with great cruelty, has not yet produced those effects which were expected from it, and which the promoters of the measure employed as a pretext for its adoption. There are indeed now no masses said but by the Constitutional Clergy; but as the people are usually as ingenious in evading laws as legislators are in forming them, many persons, instead of attending the churches, which they think profaned by priests who have taken the oaths, flock to church-yards, chapels, or other places, once appropriated to religious worship, but in disuse since the revolution, and of course not violated by constitutional masses. The cemetery of St. Denis, at Amiens, though large, is on Sundays and holidays so crowded, that it

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is almost difficult to enter it. Here the devotees flock in all weathers, say their mass, and return with the double satisfaction of having preserved their allegiance to the Pope, and risked persecution in a cause they deem meritorious. To say truth, it is not very surprising that numbers should be prejudiced against the constitutional clergy. Many of them are, I doubt not, liberal and well-meaning men, who have preferred peace and submission to theological warfare, and who might not think themselves justified in opposing their opinion to a national decision: yet are there also many of profligate lives, who were never educated for the profession, and whom the circumstances of the times have tempted to embrace it as a trade, which offered subsistence without labour, and influence without wealth, and which at once supplied a veil for licentiousness, and the means of practising it. Such pastors, it must be confessed, have little claim to the confidence or respect of the people; and that there are such, I do not assert, but on the most credible information. I will only cite two instances out of many within my own knowledge.

P——n, Bishop of St. Omer, was originally a priest of Arras, of vicious character, and many

many of his ordinations have been such as one might expect from such a patron.—A man of Arras, who was only known for his vicious pursuits, and who had the reputation of having accelerated the death of his wife by ill treatment, applied to P——n to marry him a second time. The good Bishop, preferring the interest of his friend to the salvation of his flock, advised him to relinquish the project of taking a wife, and offered to give him a cure. The proposal was accepted on the spot, and this pious associate of the Reverend P——n was immediately invested with the direction of the consciences, and the care of the morals, of an extensive parish.

Acts of this nature, it is to be imagined, were pursued by censure and ridicule; and the latter was not often more successful than on the following occasion:—Two young men, whose persons were unknown to the Bishop, one day procured an audience, and requested he would recommend them to some employment that would procure them the means of subsistence. This was just a time when the numerous vacancies that had taken place were not yet supplied, and many livings were unfilled for want of candidates. The Bishop, who was unwilling that the nonjuring priests

priests should have the triumph of seeing their benefices remain vacant, fell into the snare, and proposed their taking orders. The young men expressed their joy at the offer; but, after looking confusedly on each other, with some difficulty and diffidence, confessed their lives had been such as to preclude them from the profession, which, but for this impediment, would have satisfied them beyond their hopes. The Bishop very complaisantly endeavoured to obviate these objections, while they continued to accuse themselves of all the sins in the decalogue; but the Prelate at length observing he had ordained many worse, the young men smiled contemptuously, and, turning on their heels, replied, that if priests were made of worse men than they had described themselves to be, they begged to be excused associating with such company.

Dumourier, Custine, Biron, Dillon, &c. are doing wonders, in spite of the season; but the laurel is an ever-green, and these heroes gather it equally among the snows of the Alps, and the fogs of Belgium. If we may credit the French papers too, what they call the cause of liberty is not less successfully propagated by the pen than the sword. England is said to be on
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the eve of a revolution, and all its inhabitants, except the King and Mr. Pitt, become Jacobins. If I did not believe "the wish was father to the thought," I should read these assertions with much inquietude, as I have not yet discovered the excellencies of a republican form of government sufficiently to make me wish it substituted for our own.—It should seem that the Temple of Liberty, as well as the Temple of Virtue, is placed on an ascent, and that as many inflexions and retrogradations occur in endeavouring to attain it. In the ardour of reaching these difficult acclivities, a fall sometimes leaves one lower than the situation we first set out from; or, to speak without a figure, so much power is exercised by our leaders, and so much submission exacted from the people, that the French are in danger of becoming habituated to a despotism which almost sanctifies the errors of their ancient monarchy, while they suppose themselves in the pursuit of a degree of freedom more sublime and more absolute than has been enjoyed by any other nation.—Attempts at political as well as moral perfection, when carried beyond the limits compatible with a social state, or the weakness of our natures, are likely to end in a depravity which

which moderate governments and rational ethics would have prevented.

The debates of the Convention are violent and acrimonious. Robespierre has been accused of aspiring to the Dictatorship, and his defence was by no means calculated to exonerate him. All the chiefs reproach each other with being the authors of the late massacres, and each succeeds better in fixing the imputation on his neighbour than in removing it from himself. General reprobation, personal invectives, and long speeches, are not wanting; but every thing which tends to examination and enquiry is treated with much more delicacy and composure: so that I fear these first legislators of the republic must, for the present, be content with the reputation they have assigned each other, and rank amongst those who have all the guilt, but want the courage, of assassins.

I subjoin an extract from a newspaper, which has lately appeared.* In spite of the murder of
so

* Extract from "The Courier de l'Egalité," November, 1792:

"There are discontented people who still venture to obtrude their sentiments on the public. One of them, in a public print, thus expresses himself:

' I assert,

so many journalists, and the destruction of the printing-offices, it treats the September business
so

‘I assert, that the newspapers are sold and devoted to falsehood. At this price they purchase the liberty of appearing; and the exclusive privilege they enjoy, as well as the contradictory and lying assertions they all contain, prove the truth of what I advance. They are all preachers of liberty, yet never was liberty so shamefully outraged---of respect for property, and property was at no time so little held sacred---of personal security, yet when were there committed so many massacres? and, at the very moment I am writing, new ones are premeditated. They call vehemently for submission, and obedience to the laws, but the laws had never less influence; and while our compliance with such as we are even ignorant of is exacted, it is accounted a crime to execute those in force. Every municipality has its own arbitrary code---every battalion, every private soldier, exercises a sovereignty, a most absolute despotism; and yet the Gazettes do not cease to boast the excellence of such a government. They have, one and all, attributed the massacres of the tenth of August and the second of September, and the days following each, to a popular fermentation. The monsters! they have been careful not to tell us, that each of these horrid scenes (at the prisons, at La Force, at the Abbaye, &c. &c.) was presided by municipal officers in their scarfs, who pointed out the victims, and gave the signal for their assassination. It was (continue the Journals) the error of an irritated people---and yet their magistrates were at the head of it: it was a *momentary* error; yet this error of a moment continued during six whole days of the coolest reflection---it was only at the close of the seventh that Petion made his appearance, and affected to persuade the people to desist. The assassins left off only from fatigue, and
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to freely, that the editor will doubtless soon be silenced. Admitting these accusations to be unfounded, what ideas must the people have of their magistrates, when they are credited? It is the prepossession of the hearer that gives authenticity to fiction; and such atrocities would neither be imputed to, nor believed of, men not already bad. Yours, &c.

December.

DEAR BROTHER,

ALL the public prints still continue strongly to insinuate, that England is prepared for an insurrection, and Scotland already in actual rebellion: but I know the character of our countrymen too well to be persuaded that they have

at this moment they are preparing to begin again. The Journals do not tell us that the chief of these *Scelerats*† employed subordinate assassins, whom they caused to be clandestinely murdered in their turn, as though they hoped to destroy the proof of their crime, and escape the vengeance that awaits them. But the people themselves were accomplices in the deed, for the *Garde Nationale* gave their assistance, &c. &c.

† We have no term in the English language that conveys an adequate meaning for this word---it seems to express the extreme of human wickedness and atrocity.

adopted new principles as early as they would adopt a new mode, or that the visionary anarchists of the French government can have made many profelytes among an humane and rational people. For many years we were content to let France remain the arbitress of the lighter departments of taste: lately she has ceded this province to us, and England has dictated with uncontested superiority. This I cannot think very strange, for the eye in time becomes fatigued by elaborate finery, and requires only the introduction of simple elegance to be attracted by it. But if, while we export fashions to this country, we should receive in exchange her republican systems, it would be a strange revolution indeed; and I think, in such a commerce, we should be far from finding the balance in our favour. I have, in fact, little solicitude about these diurnal falsehoods, though I am not altogether free from alarm as to their tendency. I cannot help suspecting it is to influence the people to a belief that such dispositions exist in England as preclude the danger of a war, in case it should be thought necessary to sacrifice the King. I am more confirmed in this opinion, from the recent discovery, with the circumstances attending it, of a secret iron chest at the Tuilleries. The man who had been employed to
construct

construct this recess informs the minister Roland, who, instead of communicating the matter to the Convention, as it was very natural he should do on an occasion of so much importance, and requiring it to be opened in the presence of proper witnesses, goes privately himself, takes the papers found into his own possession, and *then* makes an application for a committee to examine them. Under these suspicious and mysterious appearances, we are told that many letters, &c. are found, which inculcate the King; and perhaps the fate of this unfortunate Monarch is to be decided by evidence not admissible with justice in the case of the obscurest malefactor. Yet Roland is the hero of a party who call him, *par excellence*, the *virtuous* Roland! Perhaps you will think, with me, that this epithet is misapplied to a man, who has risen from an obscure situation to that of first minister, without being possessed of talents of that brilliant or prominent class which sometimes force themselves into notice without the aid of wealth or the support of patronage.

Roland was inspector of manufactories in this place, and afterwards at Lyons; and I do not go too far in advancing, that a man of very rigid virtue could not, from such a station, have

attained so suddenly the one he now possesses. Virtue is of an unvarying and inflexible nature : it disdains as much to be the flatterer of mobs, as the adulator of Princes : yet how often must he, who rises so far *above* his equals, have stooped *below* them ? How often must he have sacrificed both his reason and his principles ? How often have yielded to the little, and opposed the great, not from conviction, but interest ? For in this the meanest of mankind resemble the most exalted. He bestows not his confidence on him who resists his will, nor subscribes to the advancement of one whom he does not hope to influence.—I may almost venture to add, that more dissimulation, meaner concessions, and more tortuous policy, are requisite to become the idol of the people, than are practised to acquire and preserve the favour of the most potent Monarch in Europe. The French, however, do not argue in this manner, and Roland is at present very popular, and his popularity is said to be greatly supported by the literary talents of his wife.

I know not if you rightly understand these party distinctions among a set of men whom you must regard as united in the common cause of establishing a republic in France, but you
have

have sometimes had occasion to remark in England, that many may amicably concur in the accomplishment of a work, who differ extremely about the participation of its advantages; and this is already the case with the Convention. Those who at present possess all the power, and are infinitely the strongest, are wits, moralists, and philosophers *by profession*, having Brissot, Roland, Petion, Condorcet, &c. at their head: their opponents are adventurers of a more desperate cast, who make up by violence what they want in numbers, and are led by Robespierre, Danton, Chabot, &c. &c. The only distinction of these parties is, I believe, that the first are vain and systematical hypocrites, who have originally corrupted the minds of the people by visionary and insidious doctrines, and now maintain their superiority by artifice and intrigue: their opponents, equally wicked, and more daring, justify that turpitude which the others seek to disguise, and appear almost as bad they are. The credulous people are duped by both; while the cunning of the one, and the vehemence of the other, alternately prevail.—But something too much of politics, as my design is in general rather to mark their effect on the people, than to enter on more immediate discussions.

Having been at the Criminal Tribunal to-day, I now recollect that I have never yet described to you the costume of the French Judges.— Perhaps when I have before had occasion to speak of it, your imagination may have glided to Westminster Hall, and depicted to you the scarlet robes and voluminous wigs of its respectable magistrates: but if you would form an idea of a magistrate here, you must bring your mind to the abstraction of Crambe, and figure to yourself a Judge without either gown, wig, or any of those venerable appendages. Nothing indeed can be more becoming or gallant, than this judicial accoutrement—it is black, with a silk cloak of the same colour, in the Spanish form, and a round hat, turned up before, with a large plume of black feathers. This, when the magistrate happens to be young, has a very theatrical and romantic appearance; but when it is worn by a figure a little Esopian, or with a large bushy perriwig, as I have sometimes seen it, the effect is still less awful, and a stranger, on seeing such an apparition in the street, is tempted to suppose it a period of jubilee, and that the inhabitants are in masquerade.

In vain are the people flattered with a chimerical equality—it cannot exist in a civilized state,

state, and if it could exist any where, it would not be in France. The French are habituated to subordination—they naturally look up to something superior—and when one class is degraded, it is only to give place to another.—The pride of the noblesse is succeeded by the pride of the merchant—the influence of wealth is again realized by cheap purchases of the national domains—the abandoned abbey becomes the delight of the opulent trader, and replaces the demolished chateau of the feudal institution. Full of the importance which the commercial interest is to acquire under a republic, the wealthy man of business is easily reconciled to the oppression of the superior classes, and enjoys, with great dignity, his new elevation. The counting-house of a manufacture of woollen cloth is as inaccessible as the *boudoir* of a Marquis; while the flowered brocade gown and well-powdered curls of the former offer a much more imposing exterior than the chintz *robe de chambre* and dishevelled locks of the more affable man of fashion.

It is now the custom for all people to address each other by the appellation of *Citizen*; and whether you are a citizen or not—whether you inhabit Paris, or are a native of Peru—still it

is an indication of aristocracy, either to exact, or to use, any other title. This is all congruous with the system of the day: the abuses are real, the reform is imaginary. The people are flattered with sounds, while they are losing in essentials; and the permission to apply the appellation of Citizen to its members, is but a poor compensation for the despotism of a department or a municipality.

I have read, in some French author, a maxim to this effect:—"Act with your friends as though they should one day be your enemies;" and the existing government seems amply to have profited by the admonition of their countryman: for notwithstanding they affirm, that all France supports, and all England admires them, this does not prevent their exercising a most vigilant inquisition over the inhabitants of both countries.—It is already sagaciously hinted, that Mr. Thomas Paine may be a spy, and every householder who receives a lodger or visitor, and every proprietor who lets a house, is obliged to register the names of those he entertains, or who are his tenants, and to become responsible for their conduct. This is done at the municipality, and all who thus venture to change their residence, of whatever age, sex,

or

or condition, must present themselves, and submit to an examination. The power of the municipalities is indeed very great; and as they are chiefly selected from the lower class of shopkeepers, you may conclude that their authority is not exercised with much politeness or moderation.

The timid or indolent inhabitant of London, whose head has been filled with the Bastilles and police of the ancient government, and who would as soon have ventured to Constantinople as to Paris, reads, in the debates of the Convention, that France is now the freest country in the world, and that strangers from all corners of it flock to offer their adorations in this new Temple of Liberty. Allured by these descriptions, he resolves on the journey, willing, for once in his life, to enjoy a taste of the blessing in sublimata, which he now learns has hitherto been allowed him only in the gross element. —He experiences a thousand impositions on landing with his baggage at Calais, but he submits to them without murmuring, because his countrymen at Dover had, on his embarkation, already kindly initiated him into this science of taxing the inquisitive spirit of travellers. After inscribing his name, and reward-
ing

ing the custom-house officers for rummaging his portmanteau, he determines to amuse himself with a walk about the town. The first centinel he encounters stops him, because he has no cockade: he purchases one at the next shop, (paying according to the exigency of the case,) and is suffered to pass on. When he has settled his bill at the Auberge "*a l'Angloise*," and imagines he has nothing to do but to pursue his journey, he finds he has yet to procure himself a passport. He waits an hour and an half for the officer, who at length appears, and, with a rule in one hand, and a pen in the other, begins to measure the height, and take an inventory of the features of the astonished stranger. By the time this ceremony is finished, the gates are shut, and he can proceed no farther, till the morrow. He departsearly, and is awakened twice on the road to Boulogne to produce his passport; still, however, he keeps his temper, concluding, that the new light has not yet made its way to the frontiers, and that these troublesome precautions may be necessary near a port. He continues his route, and, by degrees, becomes habituated to this regimen of liberty; till, perhaps, on the second day, the validity of his passport is disputed, the municipality who granted it have the reputation of aristocracy, or the whole is informal, and he must

must be content to wait while a messenger is dispatched to have it rectified, and the officers establish the severity of their patriotism at the expence of the stranger.

Our traveller, at length, permitted to depart, feels his patience wonderfully diminished; execrates the regulations of the coast, and the ignorance of small towns, and determines to stop a few days and observe the progress of freedom at Amiens. Being a large commercial place, he here expects to behold all the happy effects of the new constitution; he congratulates himself on travelling at a period when he can procure information, and discuss his political opinions, unannoyed by fears of state prisons, and spies of the police. His landlord, however, acquaints him, that his appearance at the Town House cannot be dispensed with—he attends three or four different hours of appointment, and is each time sent away, (after waiting half an hour with the *valets de ville* in the antichamber,) and told that the municipal officers are engaged. As an Englishman, he has little relish for these subordinate sovereigns, and difficult audiences—he hints at the next coffee-house that he had imagined a stranger might have rested two days in a free country, without

without being measured, and questioned, and without detailing his history, as though he were suspected of desertion; and ventures on some implied comparison between the ancient "Monsieur le Commandant," and the modern "*Citoyen Maire*."—To his utter astonishment he finds, that though there are no longer emissaries of the police, there are Jacobin informers; his discourse is reported to the municipality, his business in the town becomes the subject of conjecture, he is concluded to be "*un homme sans aveu*," and arrested as "*suspect*;" and it is not without the interference of the people to whom he may have been recommended at Paris, that he is released, and enabled to continue his journey.

At Paris he lives in perpetual alarm. One night he is disturbed by a *visite domiciliaire*, another by a riot—one day the people are in insurrection for bread, and the next murdering each other at a public festival; and our countryman, even after making every allowance for the confusion of a recent change, thinks himself very fortunate if he reaches England in safety, and will, for the rest of his life, be satisfied with such a degree of liberty as is secured to him by the constitution of his own country.

You

You see I have no design of tempting you to pay us a visit; and, to speak the truth, I think those who are in England will show their wisdom by remaining there. Nothing but the state of Mrs. D——'s health, and her dread of the sea at this time of the year, detains us; for every day subtracts from my courage, and adds to my apprehensions.—Yours, &c.

Amiens, January, 1793.

VANITY, I believe, my dear brother, is not so innoxious a quality as we are desirous of supposing. As it is the most general of all human failings, so is it regarded with the most indulgence: a latent consciousness averts the censure of the weak, and the wise, who flatter themselves with being exempt from it, plead in its favour, by ranking it as a foible too light for serious condemnation, or too inoffensive for punishment. Yet, if vanity be not an actual vice, it is certainly a potential one—it often leads us to seek reputation rather than virtue, to substitute appearances for realities, and to prefer the eulogiums of the world to the approbation of our own minds. When it takes possession

session of an uninformed or an ill-constituted mind, it becomes the source of a thousand errors, and a thousand absurdities. Hence, youth seeks a pre-eminence in vice, and age in folly; hence, many boast of errors they would not commit, or claim distinction by investing themselves with an imputation of excess in some popular absurdity—duels are courted by the daring, and vaunted by the coward—he who trembles at the idea of death and a future state, when alone, proclaims himself an atheist or a free-thinker in public—the water-drinker, who suffers the penitence of a week for a supernumerary glass, recounts the wonders of his intemperance—and he who does not mount the gentlest animal without trepidation, plumes himself on breaking down horses, and his perils in the chace. In short, whatever order of mankind we contemplate, we shall perceive that the portion of vanity allotted us by nature; when it is not corrected by a sound judgement, and rendered subservient to useful purposes, is sure either to degrade or mislead us.

I was led into this train of reflection by the conduct of our Anglo-Gallican legislator, Mr. Thomas Paine. He has lately composed a speech, which was translated and read in his presence,

presence, (doubtless to his great satisfaction,) in which he insists with much vehemence on the necessity of trying the King; and he even, with little credit to his humanity, gives intimations of presumed guilt. Yet I do not suspect Mr. Paine to be of a cruel or unmerciful nature; and, most probably, vanity alone has instigated him to a proceeding which, one would wish to believe, his heart disapproves. Tired of the part he was playing, and which, it must be confessed, was not calculated to flatter the censor of Kings and the reformer of constitutions, he determined to sit no longer for whole hours in colloquy with his interpreter, or in mute contemplation, like the Chancellor in the Critic; and the speech to which I have alluded was composed. Knowing that lenient opinions would meet no applause from the tribunes, he insists himself on the side of severity, and accuses all the Princes in the world as the accomplices of Louis the Sixteenth, expresses his desire for an universal revolution, and, after previously assuring the Convention the King is guilty, recommends that they may instantly proceed to his trial. But, after all this tremendous eloquence, perhaps Mr. Paine had no malice in his heart: he may only be solicitous to preserve his reputation from decay, and to indulge his self-

self-importance by assisting at the trial of a Monarch whom he may not wish to suffer.—I think, therefore, I am not wrong in asserting, that Vanity is a very mischievous counsellor.

The little distresses I formerly complained of, as arising from the paper currency, are nearly removed by a plentiful emission of small assignats, and we have now pompous assignments on the national domains for ten sols: we have, likewise, pieces coined from the church bells in circulation, but most of these disappear as soon as issued. You would scarcely imagine that this copper is deemed worthy to be hoarded; yet such is the people's aversion from the paper, and such their mistrust of the government, that not an housewife will part with one of these pieces while she has an assignat in her possession; and those who are rich enough to keep a few livres by them, amass and bury this copper treasure with the utmost solicitude and secrecy.

A tolerably accurate scale of the national confidence might be made, by marking the progress of these suspicious interments. Under the first Assembly, people began to hide their gold; during the reign of the second they took the same affectionate care of their silver; and, since the
meeting

meeting of the Convention, they seem equally anxious to hide any metal they can get. If one were to describe the present age, one might, as far as regards France, call it, both literally and metaphysically, the Iron Age; for it is certain the character of the times would justify the metaphoric application, and the disappearance of every other metal the literal one. As the French are fond of classic examples, I shall not be surprized to see an iron coinage, in imitation of Sparta, though they seem in the way of having one reason less for such a measure than the Spartans had, for they are already in a state to defy corruption; and if they were not, I think a war with England would secure the purity of their morals from being endangered by too much commercial intercourse.

I cannot be displeased with the civil things you say of my letters, nor at your valuing them so much as to preserve them; though, I assure you, this fraternal gallantry is not necessary, on the account you intimate, nor will our countrymen suffer, in my opinion, by any comparisons I can make here. Your ideas of French gallantry are, indeed, very erroneous—it may differ in the manner from that practised in England, but is far from having any claim to superiority.

Perhaps I cannot define the pretensions of the two nations in this respect better than by saying, that the gallantry of an Englishman is a sentiment—that of a Frenchman a system. The first, if a lady happen to be old or plain, or indifferent to him, is apt to limit his attentions to respect, or utility—now the latter never troubles himself with these distinctions: he is repulsed by no extremity of years, nor deformity of feature; he adores, with equal ardour, both young and old, nor is either often shocked by his visible preference of the other. I have seen a youthful beau kiss, with perfect devotion, a ball of cotton dropped from the hand of a lady who was knitting stockings for her grand-children. Another pays his court to a belle in her climacterics, by bringing *gimblettes* to the favourite lap-dog, or attending, with great assiduity, the egresses and regresses of her *Angola*, who paces slowly out of the room ten times in an hour, while the door is held open by the complaisant Frenchman with a most respectful gravity.—Thus, you see, France is to the old what a masquerade is to the ugly—the one confounds the disparity of age as the other does that of person; but indiscriminate adoration is no compliment to youth, nor is a mask any privilege to beauty. We may therefore conclude, that though France
may

may be the Elyſium of *old* women, England is that of the young. When I firſt came into this country, it reminded me of an iſland I had read of in the Arabian Tales, where the ladies were not deemed in their bloom till they verged towards ſeventy; and I conceived the project of inviting all the belles, who had been half a century out of faſhion in England, to croſs the Channel, and begin a new career of admiration! Yours, &c.

Amiens.

DEAR BROTHER,

I Have thought it hitherto a ſelf-evident propoſition—that of all the principles which can be inculcated in the human mind, that of liberty is leaſt ſuſceptible of propagation by force. Yet a Council of Philoſophers (disciples of Rouſſeau and Voltaire) have ſent forth Dumourier, at the head of an hundred thouſand men, to inſtruct the people of Flanders in the doctrine of freedom. Such a miſſionary is indeed invincible, and the defenceleſs towns of the Low Countries have been converted and pillaged * by a benevolent cruſade of the philan-

* By the civil agents of the executive power.

thropic assertors of the rights of man. These warlike *Propagandistes*, however, do not always convince without experiencing resistance, and ignorance sometimes opposes, with great obstinacy, the progress of truth. The logic of Dumourier did not enforce conviction at Gemappe, but at the expence of fifteen thousand of his own army, and, doubtless, a proportionate number of the unconverted.—Here let me forbear every expression tending to levity: the heart recoils at such a slaughter of human victims; and, if a momentary smile be excited by these Quixotisms, it is checked by horror at their consequences! Humanity will lament their destruction; but it will likewise be indignant to learn, that, in the official account of this battle, the killed were estimated at three hundred, and the wounded at six!—But, if the people be *sacrificed*, they are not deceived. The disabled sufferers who are returning to their homes in different parts of the republic, betray the turpitude of the government, and expose the fallacy of these bloodless victories of the gazettes. The pedants of the Convention are not unlearned in the history of the Prætorian Bands and the omnipotence of armies; and an offensive war is undertaken to give occupation to soldiers, whose inactivity might produce reflection, or whose
discontent

discontent might prove fatal to the *new order of things*.—Attempts are made to divert the mind from the real misery experienced at home, by relations of useless conquests abroad; the substantial losses, which are the price of these imaginary benefits, are palliated or concealed; and the circumstances of an engagement is known but by individual communication, and when subsequent events have nearly effaced the remembrance of it.—By these artifices, and from motives at least not better, and, perhaps, worse than those I have mentioned, will population be diminished, and agriculture impeded: France will be involved in present distress, and consigned to future want; and the deluded people be punished in the miseries of their own country, because their unprincipled rulers have judged it expedient to carry war and devastation into another.

One of the distinguishing features in the French character is *sang froid*—scarcely a day passes that it does not force itself on one's observation. It is not confined to the thinking part of the people, who know that passion and irritability avail nothing; nor to those who, not thinking at all, are, of course, not moved by any thing: but is equally possessed by every

rank and condition, whether you class them by their mental endowments, or their temporal possessions. They not only (as, it must be confessed, is too commonly the case in all countries,) bear the calamities of their friends with great philosophy, but are nearly as reasonable under the pressure of their own. The grief of a Frenchman, at least, partakes of his imputed national complaisance, and, far from intruding itself on society, is always ready to accept of consolation, and join in amusement. If you say your wife or relations are dead, they reply coldly, "*Il faut se consoler :*" or if they visit you in an illness, "*Il faut prendre patience.*" Or tell them you are ruined, and their features then become something more attenuated, the shoulders something more elevated, and a more commiserating tone confesses, "*C'est bien malheureux—Mais enfin que voulez vous ?*" and in the same instant they will recount some good fortune at a card party, or expatiate on the excellence of a ragout.—Yet, to do them justice, they only offer for *your* comfort the same arguments they would have found efficacious in promoting their own.

This disposition, which preserves the tranquillity of the rich, indurates the sense of
wretchedness

wretchedness in the poor ; it supplies the place of fortitude in the one, and that of patience in the other ; and, while it enables both to endure their own particular evils, it makes them submit quietly to a weight and excess of public evils, which any nation but their own would sink under, or resist. Amongst shopkeepers, servants, &c. without incurring personal odium, it has the effect of what would be deemed in England impenetrable assurance. It forces pertinaciously an article not wanted, and preserves the inflexibility of the features at a detected imposition : it inspires servants with arguments in defence of every misdemeanour in the whole domestic catalogue ; it renders them insensible either of their negligences or the consequences of them ; and endows them with a happy facility of contradicting with the most obsequious politeness.

A gentleman of our acquaintance dined at a *table d'Hôte*, where the company were annoyed by a very uncommon and offensive smell. On cutting up a fowl, they discovered the smell to have been occasioned by its being dressed without any other preparation than that of *depluming*. They immediately sent for the host, and told him, that the fowl had been dressed without

having been drawn: but, far from appearing disconcerted, as one might expect, he only replied, "*Cela se pourroit bien, Monsieur.*" Now an English Boniface, even though he had already made his fortune, would have been mortified at such an incident, and all his eloquence would scarcely have produced an unfaltering apology.

Whether this national indifference originate in a physical or a moral cause, from an obtuseness in their corporeal formation or a perfection in their intellectual one, I do not pretend to decide; but whatever be the cause, the effect is enjoyed with great modesty. So little do the French pique themselves on this valuable stoicism, that they acknowledge being more subject to that human weakness called *feeling*, than any other people in the world. All their writers abound in pathetic exclamations, sentimental phrases, and allusions to "*la sensibilité Française*," as though they imagined it proverbial. You can scarcely hold a conversation with a Frenchman without hearing him detail, with an expression of feature not always analogous, many very affecting sentences. He is *désolé*, *désespéré*, or *affligé*—he has *le cœur trop sensible*, *le cœur serré*, or *le cœur navré*; and the well-placing

placing of these dolorous assertions depends rather upon the judgement and eloquence of the speaker, than the seriousness of the case which gives rise to them. For instance, the despair and desolation of him who has lost his money, and of him whose head is ill dressed, are of different degrees, but the expressions are usually the same. The debates of the Convention, the debates of the Jacobins, and all the public prints, are fraught with proofs of this appropriated susceptibility, and it is often attributed to persons and occasions where one should not much expect to find it. A quarrel between the legislators as to who was most concerned in promoting the massacres of September, is reconciled with a "sweet and enthusiastic excess of fraternal tenderness." When the clubs dispute on the expediency of an insurrection, or the necessity of more frequent employment of the *Guillotine*, the debate terminates by overflowings of sensibility from all the members who have engaged in it!

At the assassinations in one of the prisons, when all the other miserable victims had perished, the mob discovered one Jonneau, a member of the Assembly, who had been confined for kicking another member named Grangeneuve.

geneuve.* As the assassins probably had no orders on the subject, he was brought forth from amidst heaps of murdered companions, and a messenger dispatched to the Assembly, (which during these scenes met as usual,) to enquire if they acknowledged Jonneau as a member. A decree was passed in the affirmative, and Jonneau brought by the assassins, with the decree fastened on his breast, in triumph to his colleagues, who, we are told, at this instance of respect for themselves shed tears of tenderness and admiration at the conduct of monsters, the sight of whom should seem revolting to human nature.

Perhaps the real *sang froid* I have before noticed, and these pretensions to sensibility, are a natural consequence one of the other. It is the history of the beast's confession—we have

* When the massacres began, the wife and friends of Jonneau petitioned Grangeneuve on their knees to consent to his enlargement; but Grangeneuve was implacable, and Jonneau continued in prison till released by the means abovementioned. It is observable, that at this dreadful moment the utmost strictness was observed, and every form literally enforced in granting the discharge of a prisoner. A suspension of all laws human and divine was allowed to the assassins, while those only that secured them their victims were rigidly adhered to.

only

only to be particularly deficient in any quality, to make us solicitous for the reputation of it; and after a long habit of deceiving others, we finish by deceiving ourselves. He who feels no compassion for the distresses of his neighbour, knows that such indifference is not very estimable; he therefore studies to disguise the coldness of his heart by the exaggeration of his language, and supplies, by an affected excess of sentiment, the total absence of it.—The gods have not (as you know) made me poetical, nor do I often tax your patience with a simile, but I think this French sensibility is to genuine feeling, what their paste is to the diamond—it gratifies the vanity of the wearer, and deceives the eye of the superficial observer, but is of little use or value, and when tried by the fire of adversity quickly disappears.

You are not much obliged to me for this long letter, as I own I have scribbled rather for my own amusement than with a view to yours.—Contrary to our expectation, the trial of the King has begun, and though I cannot properly be said to have any real interest in the affairs of this country, yet I take a very sincere one in the fate of its unfortunate Monarch—indeed our whole house has worn an appearance of dejection

jection since the commencement of the business. Most people seem to expect it will terminate favourably, and, I believe, there are very few who do not wish it. Even the Convention seem at present disposed to be merciful; and as they judge now, so may they be judged hereafter!—Yours.

Amiens, Feb. 15.

I Did not, as I promised, write immediately on my return from Chantilly; the person by whom I intended to send my letter having already set out for England, and the rule I have observed for the last three months of entrusting nothing to the post but what relates to our family affairs, is now more than ever necessary. I have before requested, and I must now insist, that you make no allusion to any political matter whatever, nor even mention the name of any political person. Do not imagine that *you* are qualified to judge of what is prudent, or what may be written with safety—I repeat, no one in England can form an idea of the suspicion that pervades every part of the French government.

I cannot

I cannot venture to answer decisively your question respecting the King—indeed the subject is so painful to me, that I have hitherto avoided reverting to it. There certainly was, as you observe, some sudden alteration in the dispositions of the Assembly between the end of the trial and the final judgement. The causes were most probably various, and must be sought for in the worst vices of our nature—cruelty, avarice, and cowardice. Many, I doubt not, were guided only by the natural malignity of their hearts; many acted from fear, and expected to purchase impunity for former compliances with the court by this popular expiation; a large number are also supposed to have been paid by the Duke of Orleans—whether for the gratification of malice or ambition, time must develope.—But, whatever were the motives, the result was an iniquitous combination of the worst of a set of men, before selected from all that was bad in the nation, to profane the name of justice—to sacrifice an unfortunate, but not a guilty Prince—and fix an indelible stain on the country.

Among those who gave their opinion at large, you will observe Paine; and, as I intimated in a former letter, it seems he was at that time
rather

rather allured by the vanity of making a speech that should be applauded, than by any real desire of injuring the King. Such vanity, however, is not pardonable : a man has a right to ruin *himself*, or to make himself ridiculous ; but when his vanity becomes baneful to others, as it has all the effect, so does it merit the punishment, of vice.—Of all the rest, Condorcet has most powerfully disgusted me. The avowed wickedness of Thuriot or Marat inspires one with horror ; but this cold philosophic hypocrite excites contempt as well as detestation. He seems to have wavered between a desire to preserve the reputation of humanity, which he has affected, and that of gratifying the real depravity of his mind.—Would one have expected, that a speech full of benevolent systems, mild sentiments, and aversion from the effusion of human blood, was to end in a vote for, and recommendation of, the immediate execution of his Sovereign ?—But such a conduct is worthy of *him*, who has repaid the benefits of his patron and friend * by a persecution which ended in his murder.

You will have seen, that the King made some trifling requests to be granted after his decease,

* The Duke de Rochefaucault.

and

and that the Convention ordered him to be told, that the nation, “always great, always just,” accorded them in part. Yet this just and magnanimous people refused him a preparation of only three days, and allowed him but a few hours—suffered his remains to be treated with the most scandalous indecency—and debated seriously, whether or no the Queen should receive some little tokens of affection he had left for her.

The King's enemies had so far succeeded in depreciating his personal courage, that even his friends were apprehensive he might not sustain his last moments with dignity. The event proves how much injustice have been done him in this respect, as well as in many others. His behaviour was that of a man who derived his fortitude from religion—it was that of pious resignation, not ostentatious courage; it was marked by none of those instances of levity and indifference which, at such a time, are rather symptoms of distraction than resolution; he exhibited the composure of an innocent mind, and the seriousness that became the occasion; he seemed to be occupied in preparing for death, but not to fear it.—I doubt not but the time will come, when
those

those who have sacrificed him may envy the last moments of Louis the Sixteenth!

That the King was not guilty of the principal charges brought against him, has been proved indubitably—not altogether by the assertions of those who favour him, but by the confession of his enemies. He was, for example, accused of planning the insurrection of the tenth of August; yet not a day passes that both parties in the Convention are not disputing the priority of their efforts to dethrone him, and to erect a republic; and they date their machinations long before the period on which they attribute the first aggression to the King.—Mr. Sourdat, and several other writers, have very ably demonstrated the falsehood of these charges; but the circulation of such pamphlets was dangerous—of course, secret and limited; while those which tended to deceive and prejudice the people were dispersed with profusion, at the expence of the government.*—I have seen
one

* Postscript of the *Courier de l'Egalité*, Sept. 29:

“The present minister (Roland) takes every possible means in his power to enlighten and inform the people in whatever concerns their real interests. For this purpose he has caused to be printed and distributed, in abundance, the accounts and
papers

one of these, written in coarse language, and replete with vulgar abuse, purposely calculated for the lower classes in the country, who are more open to gross impositions than those of the same rank in towns; yet I have no doubt, in my own mind, that all these artifices would have proved unavailing, had the decision been left to the nation at large: but they were intimidated, if not convinced; and the mandate of the Convention, which forbids this sovereign people to exercise their judgement, was obeyed with as much submission, and perhaps more reluctance, than an edict of Louis the Fourteenth.*

The French seem to have no energy but to destroy, and to resist nothing but gentleness or

papers relative to the events of the tenth of August. We have yet at our office a small number of these publications, which we have distributed to our subscribers, and we still give them to any of our fellow-citizens who have opportunities of circulating them."

* The King appealed, by his Counsel, to the People; but the Convention, by a decree, declared his appeal of no validity, and forbade all persons to pay attention to it, under the severest penalties.

infancy. They bend under a firm or oppressive administration, but become restless and turbulent under a mild Prince or a minority.

The fate of this unfortunate Monarch has made me reflect, with great seriousness, on the conduct of our opposition writers in England. The literary banditti who now govern France began their operations by ridiculing the King's private character—from ridicule they proceeded to calumny, and from calumny to treason; and perhaps the first libel that degraded him in the eyes of his subjects opened the path from the palace to the scaffold.—I do not mean to attribute the same pernicious intentions to the authors on your side the Channel, as I believe them, for the most part, to be only mercenary, and that they would write panegyrics as soon as satires, were they equally profitable. I know too, that there is no danger of their producing revolutions in England—we do not suffer our principles to be corrupted by a man because he has the art of rhyming nothings into consequence, nor suffer another to overturn the government because he is an orator. Yet, though these men may not be very mischievous, they are very reprehensible; and, in a moment
like

like the present, contempt and neglect should supply the place of that punishment against which our liberty of the press secures them.

It is not for a person no better informed than myself to pronounce on systems of government—still less do I affect to have more enlarged notions than the generality of mankind; but I may, without risking those imputations, venture to say, I have no childish or irrational deference for the persons of Kings. I know they are not, by nature, better than other men, and a neglected or vicious education may often render them worse. This does not, however, make me less respect the office. I respect it as the means chosen by the people to preserve internal peace and order—to banish corruption and petty tyrants*—and give vigour to the execution of the laws.—Regarded in this point of view, I cannot but lament the mode which has lately prevailed of endeavouring to alienate the consideration due to our King's public character, by personal ridicule. If an individual were attacked in this manner, his house beset with spies, his conversation with his family listened

* “ And fly from petty tyrants to the throne.”

GOLDSMITH.

to, and the most trifling actions of his life recorded, it would be deemed unfair and illiberal, and he who should practice such meanness would be thought worthy of no punishment more respectful than what might be inflicted by an oaken censor, or an admonitory heel.—But it will be said, a King is not an individual, and that such a habit, or such an amusement, is beneath the dignity of his character. Yet would it be but consistent in those who labour to prove, by the public acts of Kings, that they are *less* than men, not to exact, that, in their private lives, they should be more.—The great prototype of modern satyrists, Junius, does not allow that any credit should be given a Monarch for his domestic virtues; is he then to be reduced to an individual, only to scrutinize his foibles, and is his station to serve only as the medium of their publicity? Are these literary miners to penetrate the recesses of private life, only to bring to light the dross? Do they analyse only to discover poisons? Such employments may be congenial to their natures, but have little claim to public remuneration. The merit of a detractor is not much superior to that of a flatterer; nor is a Prince more likely to be amended by imputed follies, than by undeserved panegyrics. If any man wished to represent his King
advan-

advantageously, it could not be done better than by remarking, that, after all the watchings of assiduous necessity, and the laborious researches of interested curiosity, it appears, that his private life affords no other subjects of ridicule than, that he is temperate, domestic, and economical, and, as is natural to an active mind, wishes to be informed of whatever happens not to be familiar to him. It were to be desired that some of these accusations were applicable to those who are so much scandalized at them: but they are not *littlenesses*—the littleness is in him who condescends to report them; and I have often wondered that men of genius should make a traffic of gleaning from the refuse of anti-chambers, and retailing the anecdotes of pages and footmen!

You will perceive the kind of publications I allude to; and I hope the situation of France, and the fate of its Monarch, may suggest to the authors a more worthy employ of their talents, than that of degrading the executive power in the eyes of the people.

Amiens, Feb. 25.

I Told you, I believe, in a former letter, that the people of Amiens were all aristocrats: they have, nevertheless, two extremely popular qualifications—I mean filth and incivility. I am, however, far from imputing either of them to the revolution. This grossness of behaviour has long existed under the palliating description of “*la Franchise picarde*,” and the floors and stairs of many houses will attest their pre-eminence in filth to be of a date much anterior to the revolution.—If you purchase to the amount of an hundred livres, here are many shopkeepers who will not send your purchases home; and if the articles they show you do not answer your purpose, they are mostly fullen, and often rude. No appearance of fatigue or infirmity suggests to them the idea of offering you a seat; they contradict you with impertinence, address you with freedom, and conclude with cheating you if they can. It was certainly on this account that Sterne would not agree to dying in the inn at Amiens. He might, with equal justice, have objected to any other house; and I am sure if he thought them an unpleasant people to die amongst, he would have found them still worse to live with.—My observation

as to the civility of aristocrats does not hold good here—indeed I only meant that those who ever had any, and were aristocrats, still preserved it.

Amiens has always been a commercial town, inhabited by very few of the higher noblesse; and the mere gentry of a French province are not very much calculated to give a tone of softness and respect to those who imitate them. You may, perhaps, be surprized that I should express myself with little consideration for a class which, in England, is so highly respectable: there gentlemen of merely independent circumstances are not often distinguishable in their manners from those of superior fortune or rank. But, in France, it is different: the inferior noblesse are stiff, ceremonious, and ostentatious; while the higher ranks were always polite to strangers, and affable to their dependents. When you visit some of the former, you go through as many ceremonies as though you were to be invested with an order, and rise up and sit down so many times, that you return more fatigued than you would from a cricket match; while with the latter you are just as much at your ease as is consistent with good

breeding and propriety, and a whole circle is never put in commotion at the entrance and exit of every individual who makes part of it. Any one not prepared for these formalities, and who, for the first time, saw an assembly of twenty people all rising from their seats at the entrance of a single beau, would suppose they were preparing for a dance, and that the new comer was a musician. For my part I always find it an œconomy of strength (when the locality makes it practicable) to take possession of a window, and continue standing in readiness until the hour of visiting is over, and calm is established by placing the card tables.—The revolution has not annihilated the difference of rank, though it has abolished titles; and I counsel all who have remains of the gout or inflexible joints, not to frequent the houses of ladies whose husbands have been ennobled only by their offices, those whose genealogies are modern, or the collaterals of ancient ones, whose claims are so far removed as to be doubtful. The society of all these is very exigent, and to be avoided by the infirm or indolent.

I send you with this a little collection of airs, which I think you will find very agreeable.

The

The French music has not, perhaps, all the reputation it is entitled to. Rousseau has declared it to be nothing but doleful psalmodies; Gray calls a French concert “ *Une tintamarre de diable* :” and the prejudices inspired by these great names are not easily obliterated. One submits one’s judgement to theirs, even when one’s taste is refractory.—The French composers seem to excel in marches, in lively airs that abound in striking passages calculated for the popular taste, and yet more particularly in those simple melodies they call *romances* : they are often in a very charming and singular style, without being either so delicate or affecting as the Italian. They have an expression of plaintive tenderness, which makes one tranquil rather than melancholy; and which, though it be more soothing than interesting, is yet very delightful.—Yours, &c.

Amiens, February.

I Do all possible justice to the liberality of my countrymen, who are become such passionate admirers of the French; and I cannot but lament their having been so unfortunate in the choice of the æra from whence they date this new friendship. It is, however, a proof, that their regards are not the effect of that kind of vanity which esteems objects in proportion as they are esteemed by the rest of the world; and the sincerity of an attachment cannot be better evinced than by its surviving irretrievable disgrace and universal abhorrence. Many will swell the triumph of a hero, or add a trophy to his tomb; but he who exhibits himself with a culprit at the gallows, or decorates the gibbet with a wreath, is a friend indeed.

If ever the character of a people were repugnant to amity, or inimical to connection, it is that of the French for the last three years.*

In

* The editor of the *Courier de l'Egalité*, a most decided patriot, thus expresses himself on the injuries and insults received by the King from the Parisians, and their municipality, previous to his trial:

“ I know that Louis is culpable---but are we to double his
punishment

In this short space they have formed a compendium of all the vices which have marked as many preceding ages:—the cruelty and treachery of the league—the sedition, levity, and intrigue of the *Fronde* *—with the licentiousness and political corruption of more modern epochs. Whether you examine the conduct of the nation at large, or that of its chiefs and leaders, your feelings revolt at the one, and your integrity despises the other. You see the idols erected by Folly, degraded by Caprice;—the authority obtained by Intrigue, bartered by

punishment before it is pronounced by the law? Indeed one would say, that instead of being guided by the humanity and philosophy which dictated the revolution, we took lessons of barbarity from the most ferocious savages! Let us be virtuous, if we would be republicans; if we go on as we do, we never shall, and must have recourse to a despot: for of two evils it is better to choose the least."

This editor, whose opinion of the present politics is thus expressed, is so truly a revolutionist, and so confidential a patriot, that, in August last, when almost all the journalists were murdered, his paper was the only one that, for some time, was allowed to reach the departments.

* A name given to the party in opposition to the court during Cardinal Mazarin's ministry.—See the origin of it in the Memoirs of that period.

Profligacy;

Profligacy;—and the perfidy and corruption of one side so balanced by the barbarity and levity of the other, that the mind, unable to decide on the preference of contending vices, is obliged to find repose, though with regret and disgust, in acknowledging the general depravation.

La Fayette, without very extraordinary pretensions, became the hero of the revolution. He dictated laws in the Assembly, and prescribed oaths to the *Garde Nationale*—and, more than once, insulted, by the triumph of ostentatious popularity, the humiliation and distress of a persecuted Sovereign. Yet when La Fayette made an effort to maintain the constitution to which he owed his fame and influence, he was abandoned with the same levity with which he had been adopted, and sunk, in an instant, from a dictator to a fugitive!

Neckar was an idol of another description. He had already departed for his own country, when he was hurried back precipitately, amidst universal acclamations. All were full of projects either of honour or recompence—one was for decreeing him a statue, another proposed him a pension, and a third hailed him the father
of

of the country. But Mr. Neckar knew the French character, and very wisely declined these pompous offers; for before he could have received the first quarter of his pension, or the statue could have been modelled, he was glad to escape, probably not without some apprehensions for his head!

The reign of Mirabeau was something longer. He lived with popularity, was fortunate enough to die before his reputation was exhausted, was deposited in the Pantheon, *apotheosified* in form, and his bust placed as a companion to that of Brutus, the tutelary genius of the Assembly.—Here, one might have expected, he would have been quit for this world at least; but the fame of a patriot is not secured by his death, nor can the gods of the French be called the immortal gods: the deification of Mirabeau is suspended, his money put in sequestration, and a committee appointed to enquire, whether a profligate, expensive, and necessitous character was likely to be corruptible. The Convention, too, seem highly indignant that a man, remarkable only for vice and atrocity, should make no conscience of betraying those who were as bad as himself; and that, after having prostituted his talents from the moment he was conscious of them, he
should

should not, when associated with such immaculate colleagues, become pure and disinterested. It is very probable that Mirabeau, whose only aim was power, might rather be willing to share it with the King, as Minister, than with so many competitors, and as only Prime Speech-Maker to the Assembly: and as he had no reason for suspecting the patriotism of others more inflexible than his own, he might think it not impolitic to anticipate a little the common course of things, and betray his *companions*, before they had time to stipulate for selling *him*. He might, too, think himself more justified in disposing of them in the gross, because he did not thereby deprive them of their right of bargaining for themselves, and each other in detail.* The King might also be solicitous to

* La Porte, Steward of the Household, in a letter to Duquesnoy,† dated February, 1791, informs him that Barrere, Chairman of the Committee of Domains, is in the best disposition possible.---A letter of Talon, (then Minister,) with remarks in the margin by the King, says, that "Sixteen of the most violent members on the patriotic side may be brought over to the court, and that the expence will not exceed two millions of livres: that fifteen thousand will be sufficient for the first payment; and only a Yes or No from his Majesty will fix these members in his interest, and direct their future conduct."

† Not, I presume, the brutal Duquesnoy hereafter mentioned.

to purchase safety and peace at any rate ; and it is unfortunate for himself and the country that he

conduct."—It likewise observes, that these two millions will cost the King nothing, as the affair is already arranged with the Liquidator General.

Extract of a letter from Chambonas to the King, dated June 18, 1792 :

" SIRE,

" I inform your Majesty, that my agents are now in motion. I have just been converting an evil spirit. I cannot hope to have made him good, but I believe I have neutralized him.—To-night we shall make a strong effort to gain Santerre, (Commandant of the *Garde Nationale*,) and I have ordered myself to be awakened to hear the result. I shall take care to humour the different interests as well as I can.—The Secretary of the Cordeliers club is now secured.—All these people are to be bought, but not one of them can be hired.—I have had with me one Mollet, a physician. Perhaps your Majesty may have heard of him. He is an outrageous Jacobin, and very difficult, for he will receive nothing. He insists, previous to coming to any definitive treaty, on being named Physician to the Army. I have promised him, on condition that Paris is kept quiet for fifteen days. He is now gone to exert himself in our favour. He has great credit at the *Caffé de Procope*, where all the journalists and "*enragés*" of the Fauxbourg St. Germain assemble. I hope he will keep his word.—The orator of the people, the noted Le Maire, a clerk at the Post-office, has promised tranquillity for a week, and he is to be rewarded.

" A new

he had not recourse to the only effectual means till it was too late. But all this rests on no better evidence than the papers found at the Thuilleries; and as something of this kind was necessary to aliment the exhausted fury of the populace, I can easily conceive that it was thought more prudent to sacrifice the dead, than the living; and the fame of Mirabeau being

“ A new Gladiator has appeared lately on the scene, one Ronedie Breton, arrived from England. He has already been exciting the whole quarter of the Poissonnerie in favour of the Jacobins, but I shall have him laid siege to.—Petion is to come to-morrow for fifteen thousand livres,† on account of thirty thousand per month which he received under the administration of Dumourier, for the secret service of the police.--- I know not in virtue of what law this was done, and it will be the last he shall receive from me. Your Majesty will, I doubt not, understand me, and approve of what I suggest.

(Signed)

“ CHAMBONAS.”

Extract from the Papers found at the Thuilleries.

It is impossible to warrant the authenticity of these Papers; on their credibility, however, rests the whole proof of the most weighty charges brought against the King. So that it must be admitted, that either all the first patriots of the revolution, and many of those still in repute, are corrupt, or that the King was condemned on forged evidence.

† This sum was probably only to propitiate the Mayor; and if Chambonas, as he proposed, refused farther payment, we may account for Petion's subsequent conduct.

less valuable than the safety of those who survived him, there would be no great harm in attributing to him what he was very likely to have done.—The corruption of a notorious courtier would have made no impression: the King had already been overwhelmed with such accusations, and they had lost their effect: but to have seduced the virtuous Mirabeau, the very Confucius of the revolution, was a kind of profanation of the holy fire, well calculated to revive the languid rage, and extinguish the small remains of humanity yet left among the people.—It is sufficiently remarkable, that notwithstanding the court must have seen the necessity of gaining over the party now in power, no vestige of any attempt of this kind has been discovered; and every criminating negotiation is ascribed to the dead, the absent, or the insignificant. I do not, however, presume to decide in a case so very delicate; their panegyrists in England may adjust the claims of Mirabeau's integrity, and that of his accusers, at their leisure.

Another patriot of “distinguished note,” and more peculiarly interesting to our countrymen, because he has laboured much for their conversion, is Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun.—

He was in England some time as Plenipotentiary from the Jacobins, charged with establishing treaties between the clubs, publishing seditious manifestos, contracting friendly alliances with discontented scribblers, and gaining over neutral or hostile newspapers.—But, besides his political and ecclesiastical occupations, and that of writing letters to the Constitutional Society, it seems this industrious Prelate had likewise a correspondence with the Agents of the Court, which, though he was too modest to surcharge his fame by publishing it, was, nevertheless, very profitable. I am sorry his friends in England are mostly averse from his episcopacy, otherwise they might have provided for him, as I imagine he will have no objection to relinquish his claims on the see of Autun. He is now under accusation, and, were he to return, he would not find the laws quite so ceremonious here as in England. After labouring with impunity for months together to promote an insurrection with you, a small private barter of his talents would here cost him his head; and I appeal to the Bishop's friends in England, whether there can be a proper degree of freedom in a country where a man is refused the privilege of disposing of himself to the best advantage.

To

To the eternal obloquy of France, I must include, in the list of those once popular, the *ci-devant* Duke of Orleans.—But it was an unnatural popularity, unaided by a single talent, or a single virtue, supported only by the venal efforts of those who were almost his equals in vice, though not in wealth, and who found a grateful exercise for their abilities in at once profiting by the weak ambition of a bad man, and corrupting the public morals in his favour. The unrighteous compact is now dissolved; those whom he has ruined himself to bribe have already forsaken him, and perhaps may endeavour to palliate the disgrace of having been called his friends, by becoming his persecutors. Thus, many of the primitive patriots are dead, or fugitives, or abandoned, or treacherous; and I am not without fear lest the new race should prove as evanescent as the old.

The virtuous Roland,* whose first resignation was so instrumental in dethroning the King,

* In the beginning of December, the Council General of the municipality of Paris opened a register and appointed a committee to receive all accusations and complaints whatever against Roland, who, in return, summoned them to deliver in their accounts to him as Minister of the interior, and accused them, at the same time, of the most scandalous peculations.

has now been obliged to resign a second time, charged with want of capacity, and suspected of malversation; and this virtue, which was so irreproachable, which it would have been so dangerous to dispute while it served the purposes of party, is become hypocrisy, and Roland will be fortunate if he returns to obscurity with only the loss of his gains and his reputation.

The credit of Brissot and the Philosophers is declining fast—the clubs are unpropitious, and no party long survives this formidable omen; so that, like Macbeth, they will have waded from one crime to another, only to obtain a short-lived dominion, at the expence of eternal infamy, and an unlamented fall.

Dumourier is still a successful General, but he is denounced by one faction, insulted by another, insidiously praised by a third; and if he should persevere in serving them, he has more disinterested rectitude than I suspect him of, or than they merit. This is also another of the Jacobin ministry who were so fatal to the King, and it is evident that, had he been permitted to entertain the same opinion of all these people as they now profess to have of each other, he would

would have been still living, and secure on his throne.

After so many mutual infidelities, it might be expected that one party would grow indifferent, and the other suspicious; but the French never despair: new hordes of patriots prepare to possess themselves of the places they are forcing the old ones to abandon, and the people, eager for change, are ready to receive them with the momentary and fallacious enthusiasm which ever precedes disgrace; while those who are thus intriguing for power and influence are, perhaps, secretly devising how it may be made most subservient to their personal advantage.

Yet, perhaps, these amiable levities may not be displeasing to the Constitutional Society and the revolutionists of England, and as the very faults of our friends are often endearing to us, they may extend their indulgence to the *humane* and *liberal* precepts of the Jacobins, and the massacres of September.—To confess the truth, I am not a little ashamed for my country when I see addresses from England to a Convention, who have just been accusing each other of assassination and robbery, or, in the ardour of a
o 3 debate,

debate, threatening, cuffing, and knocking each other down. Exclusive of their moral character, considered only as it appears from their reciprocal criminations, they have so little pretension to dignity, or even decency, that it seems a mockery to address them as the political representatives of a powerful nation deliberating upon important affairs.—If a bearer of one of these congratulatory compliments were not apprized of the forms of the House, he would be rather astonished, at his introduction, to see one member in a menacing attitude, and another denying his veracity in terms perfectly explicit, though not very civil. Perhaps, in two minutes, the partizans of each opponent all rise and clamour, as if preparing for a combat—the President puts on his hat as the signal of a storm—the subordinate disputants are appeased—and the revilings of the principal ones renewed; till, after torrents of indecent language, the quarrel is terminated by a fraternal embrace.*—I think, after

* I do not make any assertions of this nature from conjecture or partial evidence. The journals of the time attest that the scenes I describe occur at almost every debate.--- As a proof, I subjoin some extracts taken nearly at hazard:

“ January 7th, Convention Nationale, Presidence de Tréilhards.---The debate was opened by an address from the department

after such a scene, an addresser must feel a little humiliated, and would return without finding his pride greatly increased by his mission.

It

partment of Finisterre, expressing their wishes, and adding, that these were likewise the wishes of the nation at large---that Marat, Robespierre, Bazire, Chabot, Merlin, Danton, and their accomplices, might be expelled the Convention as caballers and intriguers paid by the tyrants at war with France."

The account of this debate is thus continued---"The almost daily troubles which arise in the Convention were on the point of being renewed, when a member, a friend to order, spoke as follows, and, *it is remarked*, was quietly listened to:

'CITIZENS,

'If three months of uninterrupted silence has given me any claim to your attention, I now ask it in the name of our afflicted country. Were I to continue silent any longer, I should render myself as culpable as those who never hold their tongues. I see we are all sensible of the painfulness of our situation. Every day dissatisfied with ourselves, we come to the debate with the intention of doing something, and every day we return without having done any thing. The people expect from us wise laws, and not storms and tumults. How are we to make these wise laws, and keep twenty-five millions of people quiet, when we, who are only seven hundred and fifty individuals, give an example of perpetual riot and disorder? What signifies our preaching the unity and indivisibility of the republic, when we cannot maintain peace and union amongst ourselves? What good can we expect to do amidst such scandalous disturbances, and while we spend our

It is very remarkable, that, on the same day on which the friends of liberty and equality of Manchester

time in attending to delations, accusations, and inculpations, for the most part utterly unfounded? For my part, I see but one means of attaining any thing like dignity and tranquillity, and that is, by submitting ourselves to coercive regulations.'

Here follow some proposals, tending to establish a little decency in their proceedings for the future; but the account from whence this extract is taken goes on by remarking, that this invitation to peace was no sooner finished, than a new scene of disturbance took place, to the great loss of their time, and the scandal of all good citizens. One should imagine, that if ever the Convention would think it necessary to assume an appearance of dignity, or, at least, of seriousness and order, it would be in giving their judgement relative to the King. Yet, in determining how a series of questions should be discussed, on the arrangement of which his fate seems much to have depended, the solemnity of the occasion appears to have had no weight. It was proposed to begin by that of the appeal to the people. This was so violently combated, that the Convention would hear neither party, and were a long time without debating at all. Petion mounted the tribune, and attempted to restore order; but the noise was too great for him to be heard. He at length, however, obtained silence enough to make a motion. Again the murmurs recommenced. Rabaud de St. Etienne made another attempt, but was equally unsuccessful. Those that were of an opposite opinion refused to hear him, and both parties rose up and rushed together to the middle of the Hall. The most dreadful tumult took place, and the President, with great difficulty, procured a calm. Again the storm began, and

Manchester signalized themselves by a most patriotic compliment to the Convention, beginning with "*Français vous êtes libres,*" they were, at that very moment, discussing a petition from numbers of Parisians who had been thrown into prison without knowing either their crime or their accusers, and were still detained under the same arbitrary circumstances.—The law of the constitution is, that every person arrested shall be interrogated within twenty-four hours; but as these imprisonments were the work of the republican ministers, the Convention seemed to think it indelicate to interpose, and these citizens of a country whose freedom is so much envied by the Manchester Society will most

and a member told them, that if they voted in the affirmative, those on the left side (Robespierre, &c.) would not wait the result, but have the King assassinated. "Yes! Yes! (resounded from all parts) the *Scelerats* of Paris will murder him!"—Another violent disorder ensuing, it was thought no decree could be passed, and, at length, amidst this scene of riot and confusion, the order of questions was arranged, and in such a manner as to decide the fate of the King.—It was determined, that the question of his guilt should precede that of the appeal to the people. Had the order of the questions been changed, the King might have been saved, for many would have voted for the appeal in the first instance who did not dare do it when they found the majority resolved to pronounce him guilty.

likely

likely remain in durance as long as it shall be convenient to those who have placed them there. A short time after, Villette, who is a news-writer and deputy, was cited to appear before the municipality of Paris, under the charge of having inserted in his paper "equivocal phrases and anti-civic expressions, tending to diminish the confidence due to the municipality."—Villette, as being a member of the Convention, obtained redress; but had he been only a journalist, the liberty of the press would not have rescued him.—On the same day, complaint was made in the Assembly, that one man had been arrested instead of another, and confined for some weeks, and it was agreed unanimously, (a thing that does not often occur,) that the powers exercised by the Committee of Inspection * were incompatible with liberty.

The patriots of Belfast were not more fortunate in the adaptation of their civilities—they addressed the Convention, in a strain of great piety, to congratulate them on the success of their arms in the "cause of civil and religious liberty." † The harangue was interrupted by the

* Surveillance.—See Debates, December.

† At this time the municipalities were empowered to search any house by night or day; but their *visites domiciliares*, as they

the *mal-à-propos* entrance of two deputies, who complained of having been beaten, almost hanged, and half drowned, by the people of Chartres, for belonging, as they were told, to an assembly of atheistical persecutors of religion; and this Convention, whom the Society of Belfast admire for propagating “religious liberty” in *other* countries, were in a few days humbly petitioned, from various departments, not to destroy it in their own. I cannot, indeed, suppose they have really such a design; but the contempt with which they treat religion has occasioned an alarm, and given the French an idea of their piety very different from that so kindly conceived by the patriots of Belfast.

I entrust this to our friend Mrs. —, who is leaving France in a few days; and as we are now on the eve of a war, it will be the last letter you will receive, except a few lines occasionally on our private affairs, or to inform you of my health. As we cannot, in the state Mrs.

they are called, being made chiefly in the night, a decree has since ordained that they shall take place only during the day. Perhaps an Englishman may think the latter quite sufficient, considering that France is the freest country in the world, and, above all, a republic.

D—

D—— is in, think of returning to England at present, we must trust ourselves to the hospitality of the French for at least a few weeks, and I certainly will not abuse it, by sending any remarks on their political affairs out of the country. But as I know you interest yourself much in the subject, and read with partiality my attempts to amuse you, I will continue to throw my observations on paper as regularly as I have been accustomed to do, and I hope, ere long, to be the bearer of the packets myself. I here also renew my injunction, that no part of my correspondence that relates to French politics be communicated to any one, not even my mother. What I have written has been merely to gratify your own curiosity, and I should be extremely mortified if my opinions were repeated even in the little circle of our private acquaintance. I deem myself perfectly justifiable in imparting my reflections to you, but I have a sort of delicacy that revolts at the thoughts of being, in the remotest degree, accessory to conveying intelligence from a country in which I reside, and which is so peculiarly situated as France is at this moment. My feelings, my humanity, are averse from those who govern, but I should regret to be the means of
injuring

injuring them. You cannot mistake my intentions, and I conclude by seriously reminding you of the promise I exacted previous to any political discussion.—Adieu.

Amiens.

I Have been to-day to take a last view of the convents: they are now advertised for sale, and will probably soon be demolished. You know my opinion is not, on the whole, favourable to these institutions, and that I thought the decree which extinguished them, but which secured to the religious already profest the undisturbed possession of their habitations during life, was both politic and humane. Yet I could not see the present state of these buildings without pain—they are now inhabited by volunteers, who are passing a noviciate of intemperance and idleness, previous to their reception in the army; and those who recollect the peace and order that once reigned within the walls of a monastery, cannot but be stricken with the contrast. I felt both for the expelled and present possessors, and, perhaps, gave a mental preference to the superstition which founded such establishments.

establiſhments, over the perſecution that deſtroys them.

The reſigned and pious votaries, who once ſuppoſed themſelves ſecure from all the vicifſitudes of fortune, and whoſe union ſeemed diſſoluble only by the common lot of mortality, are now many of them diſperſed, wandering, friendleſs, and miſerable. The religion which they cheriſhed as a comfort, and practiſed as a duty, is now purſued as a crime; and it is not yet certain that they will not have to chooſe between an abjuration of their principles, and the relinquiſhment of the means of exiſtence.—The military occupiers offered nothing very alleviating to ſuch unpleaſant reflections; and I beheld with as much regret the collecting of theſe ſcattered individuals, as the ſeparation of thoſe whoſe habitations they fill. They are moſt of them extremely young, taken from villages and the ſervice of agriculture, and are going to riſk their lives in a cauſe deteſted perhaps by more than three parts of the nation, and only to ſecure impunity to its oppreſſors.

It has uſually been a maxim in all civilized ſtates, that when the general welfare neceſſitates ſome act of partial injuſtice, it ſhall be done
with

with the utmost consideration for the sufferer, and that the required sacrifice of moral to political expediency shall be palliated, as much as the circumstances will admit, by the manner of carrying it into execution. But the French legislators in this respect, as in most others, truly original, disdain all imitation, and are rarely guided by such confined motives. With them, private rights are frequently violated, only to facilitate the means of public oppressions—and cruel and iniquitous decrees are rendered still more so by the mode of enforcing them.

I have met with no person who could conceive the necessity of expelling the female religious from their convents. It was, however, done, and that with a mixture of meanness and barbarity which at once excites contempt and detestation. The ostensible reasons were, that these communities afforded an asylum to the superstitious, and that by their entire suppression a sale of the houses would enable the nation to afford the religious a more liberal support than had been assigned them by the Constituent Assembly. But they are shallow politicians who expect to destroy superstition by persecuting those who practise it: and so far from adding,
as

as the decree insinuates, to the pensions of the nuns, they have now subjected them to an oath which, to those whose consciences are timid, will act as a prohibition to their receiving what they were before entitled to.

The real intention of the legislature in thus entirely dispersing the female religious, besides the general hatred to every thing connected with religion, is, to possess itself of an additional resource in the buildings and effects, and, as is imagined by some, to procure numerous and convenient state prisons. But, I believe, the latter is only an aristocratic apprehension, suggested by the appropriation of the convents to this use in a few places, where the ancient prisons are full.—Whatever it is to answer, the purpose has been effected in a way disgraceful to any national body, except such a one as the Convention; and, though it be easy to perceive the cruelty of such a measure, yet as, perhaps, its injustice may not strike you so forcibly as if you had had the same opportunities of investigating it as I have, I will endeavour to explain, as well as I can, the circumstances that render it so peculiarly aggravated.

I need

I need not remind you, that no order is of very modern foundation, nor that the present century has, in a great degree, exploded the fashion of compounding for sins by endowing religious institutions. Thus, necessarily, by the great change which has taken place in the expence of living, many establishments that were poorly endowed must have become unable to support themselves, but for the efforts of those who were attached to them. It is true, that the rent of land has increased as its produce became more valuable; but every one knows that the lands dependent on religious houses have always been let on such moderate terms, as by no means to bear a proportion to the necessities they were intended to supply; and as the monastic vows have long ceased to be the frequent choice of the rich, little increase has been made to the original stock by the accession of new votaries:—yet, under all these disadvantages, many societies have been able to rebuild their houses, embellish their churches, purchase plate, &c. &c. The love of their order, that spirit of œconomy for which they are remarkable, and a persevering industry, had their usual effects, and not only banished poverty, but became a source of wealth. An indefatigable labour at such works as could be profitably

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disposed of, the education of children, and the admission of boarders, were the means of enriching a number of convents, whose proper revenues would not have afforded them even a subsistence.

But the fruits of active toil, or voluntary privation, have been confounded with those of expiatory bequest and mistaken devotion, and have alike become the prey of a rapacious and unfeeling government. Many communities are driven from habitations built absolutely with the produce of their own labour. In some places they were refused even their beds and linen; and their stock of wood, corn, &c. provided out of the savings of their pensions, (understood to be at their own disposal,) have been seized, and sold, without making them the smallest compensation.

Thus deprived of every thing, they are sent into the world with a prohibition either to live several of them together, wear their habits,* or practise their religion; yet their pensions † are

* Two religious, who boarded with a lady I had occasion to see sometimes, told me, that they had been strictly enjoined not to dress like each other in any way.

† The pensions are from about seventeen to twenty-five pounds

are too small for them to live upon but in society, or to pay the usual expence of boarding; many of them have no other means of procuring secular dresses, and still more will imagine themselves criminal in abstaining from the mode of worship they have been taught to think salutary. It is also to be remembered, that women of small fortune in France often embraced the monastic life as a frugal retirement, and, by sinking the whole they were possessed of in this way, they expected to secure a certain provision, and to place themselves beyond the reach of future vicissitudes: yet, though the sums paid on these occasions can be easily ascertained, no indemnity has been made; and many will be obliged to violate their principles, in order to receive a trifling pension, perhaps much less than the interest of their money would have produced without loss of the principal.

But the views of these legislating philosophers are too sublimely extensive to take in the

pounds sterling per annum.---At the time I am writing, the necessaries of life are increased in price nearly two-fifths of what they were formerly sold at, and are daily becoming dearer. The Convention are not always insensible to this---the pay of the *foot soldier* is more than doubled.

wrongs or sufferings of cotemporary individuals; and not being able to disguise, even to themselves, that they create much misery at present, they promise incalculable advantages to those who shall happen to be alive some centuries hence! Most of these poor nuns are, however, of an age to preclude them from the hope of enjoying this Millennium; and they would have been content *en attendant* these glorious times, not to be deprived of the necessities of life, or marked out as objects of persecution.

The private distresses occasioned by the dissolution of the convents are not the only consequences to be regretted—for a time, at least, the loss must certainly be a public one. There will now be no means of instruction for females, nor any refuge for those who are without friends or relations: thousands of orphans must be thrown unprotected on the world, and guardians, or single men left with the care of children, have no way to dispose of them properly. I do not contend that the education of a convent is the best possible: yet are there many advantages attending it; and I believe it will readily be granted, that an education not quite perfect is better than no education at all. It would

would not be very difficult to prove, that the systems of education, both in England and France, are extremely defective; and if the characters of women are generally better formed in one than the other, it is not owing to the superiority of boarding-schools over convents, but to the difference of our national manners, which tend to produce qualities not necessary, or not valued, in France.

The most distinguished female excellencies in England are an attachment to domestic life, an attention to its œconomies, and a cultivated understanding. Here, any thing like housewifery is not expected but from the lower classes, and reading or information is confined chiefly to professed wits. Yet the qualities so much esteemed in England are not the effect of education: few domestic accomplishments, and little useful knowledge, are acquired at a boarding-school; but finally the national character asserts its empire, and the female who has gone through a course of frivolities from six to sixteen, who has been taught that the first “human principle” should be to give an elegant *tournure* to her person, after a few years’ dissipation, becomes a good wife and mother, and a rational companion.

In France, young women are kept in great seclusion: religion and œconomy form a principal part of conventual acquirements, and the natural vanity of the sex is left to develop itself without the aid of authority, or instillation by precept—yet when released from this sober tuition, manners take the ascendant here as in England, and a woman commences at her marriage the æra of coquetry, idleness, freedom, and rouge.—We may therefore, I think, venture to conclude, that the education of a boarding-school is better calculated for the rich, that of a convent for the middling classes and the poor; and, in consequence of that, the suppression of this last in France will principally affect those to whom it was most beneficial, and to whom the want of it will be most dangerous.

A committee of wise men are now forming a plan of public instruction, which is to excel every thing ever adopted in any age or country; and we may therefore hope that the defects which have hitherto prevailed, both in theirs and our own, will be remedied. All we have to apprehend is, that, amidst so many wise heads, more than one wise plan may be produced, and a difficulty of choice keep the rising generation in a sort of abeyance, so that they must remain
sterile,

sterile, or may become vitiated, while it is determining in what manner they shall be cultivated.

It is almost a phrase to say the resources of France are wonderful, and this is no less true than generally admitted. Whatever be the want or loss, it is no sooner known than supplied, and the imagination of the legislature seems to become fertile in proportion to the exigence of the moment.—I was in some pain at the disgrace of Mirabeau, lest this new kind of retrospective judgement should depopulate the Pantheon of the few divinities that remained; more especially when I considered that Voltaire, notwithstanding his merits as an enemy to revelation, had been already accused of aristocracy, and even Rousseau himself might not be found impeccable. His *contrat social* might not, perhaps, in the eyes of a committee of philosophical Rhadmanthus's, atone for his occasional admiration of christianity, and thus some crime, either of church or state, disfranchise the whole race of immortals, and their fame scarcely outlast the dispute about their earthly remains.*

* Alluding to the disputes between the Convention and the person who claimed the exclusive right to the remains of Rousseau.

My concern, on this account, was the more justifiable, because the great fallibility which prevailed among the patriots, and the very delicate state of the reputation of those who retained their political existence, afforded no hope that *they* could ever fill the vacancies of the Pantheon.—But my fears were very superfluous—France will never want subjects for an apotheosis, and if one divinity be dethroned, “another and another still succeeds,” all equally worthy as long as they continue in fashion.—The phrenzy of despair has supplied a successor to Mirabeau, in Le Pelletier.* The latter had hitherto been little heard of, but his death offered an occasion for exciting the people too favourable to be neglected: his patriotism and his virtues immediately increased in a ratio to the use which might be made of them; ‡ a dying speech proper for the purpose was composed, and it was decreed unanimously, that he

* De St. Fargeau.

‡ At the first intelligence of his death, a member of the Convention, who was with him, and had not yet had time to study a speech, confessed his last words to have been, “*J’ai froid*.”—This, however, would have made no figure on the banners of a funeral procession; and Le Pelletier was made to die, like the hero of a tragedy, uttering blank verse.

should

should be installed in all the rights, privileges, and immortalities of the degraded Riquette.—The funeral that preceded these divine awards was a farce which tended more to provoke a massacre of the living, than to honour the dead; and the Convention, who vowed to sacrifice their animosities on his tomb, do so little credit to the conciliating influence of St. Fargeau's virtues, that they now dispute with more acrimony than ever.

The departments, who begin to be extremely submissive to Paris, thought it incumbent on them to imitate this ceremony; but as it was rather an act of fear than patriotism, it was performed here with so much œconomy, and so little inclination, that the whole was cold and paltry.—An altar was erected on the great market-place, and so little were the people affected by the catastrophe of a patriot whom they were informed had sacrificed * his life in their

* There is every reason to believe that Le Pelletier was not singled out for his patriotism.---It is said, and with much appearance of probability, that he had promised Paris, with whom he had been intimate, not to vote for the death of the King; and, on his breaking his word, Paris, who seems to have not been perfectly in his senses, assassinated him.—Paris had been in the *Garde du Corps*, and, like most of his brethren,

their cause, that the only part of the business which seemed to interest them was the extravagant gestures of a woman in a dirty white dress, hired to act the part of a "*pleureuse*," or mourner, and whose sorrow appeared to divert them infinitely.—It will ever be so where the people are not left to consult their own feelings. The mandate that orders them to assemble may be obeyed, but "that which passeth show" is not to be enforced. It is a limit prescribed by Nature herself to authority, and such is the aversion of the human mind from dictature and

brethren, was strongly attached to the King's person.—Rage and despair prompted him to the commission of an act, which can never be excused, however the perpetrator may imagine himself the mere instrument of Divine vengeance.—Notwithstanding the most vigilant research, he escaped for some time, and wandered as far as Forges d'Eaux, a little town in Normandy.—At the inn where he lodged, the extravagance of his manner giving suspicions that he was insane, the municipality were applied to secure him. An officer entered his room while he was in bed, and intimated the purpose he was come for. Paris affected to comply, and, turning, drew a pistol from under the clothes, and shot himself.—Among the papers found upon him, were some affecting lines, expressive of his contempt for life, and adding, that the influence of his example was not to be dreaded, since he left none behind him that deserved the name of Frenchmen!

restraint,

restraint, that here an official rejoicing is often more serious than these political exactions of regret levied in favour of the dead,—Yours, &c. &c.

March 23.

THE partizans of the French in England alledge, that the revolution, by giving them a government founded on principles of moderation and rectitude, will be advantageous to all Europe, and more especially to Great Britain, which has so often suffered by wars, the fruit of their intrigues.—This reasoning would be unanswerable could the character of the people be changed with the form of their government; but, I believe, whoever examines its administration, whether as it relates to foreign powers or internal policy, will find that the same spirit of intrigue, fraud, deception, and want of faith, which dictated in the cabinet of Mazarine or Louvois, has been transfused, with the addition of meanness and ignorance,* into a Constitutional

* The Executive Council is composed of men who, if ever they were well-intentioned, must be totally unfit for the government of an extensive republic.—Monge, the Minister of the

tional Ministry, or the Republican Executive Council.—France had not yet determined on the articles of her future political creed, when agents were dispatched to make proselytes in England, and, in proportion as she assumed a more popular form of government, all the qualities which have ever marked her as the disturber of mankind seem to have acquired new force. Every where the ambassadors of the republic are accused of attempts to excite revolt and discontent, and England* is now forced

the Marine, is a professor of geometry; Garat, Minister of Justice, a gazette writer; Le Brun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, ditto; and Pache, Minister of the Interior, a private tutor.---Whoever reads the debates of the Convention, will find few indications of real talents, and much pedantry and ignorance. For example, Anacharsis Cloots, who is a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, and who one should, of course, expect not to be *more* ignorant than his colleagues, has lately advised them to distress the enemy by invading Scotland, which he calls the *granary* of England.

* For some time previous to the war, all the French priests, and even the members of the Convention, in their debates, announced England to be on the point of an insurrection. The intrigues of Chauvelin, their ambassador, to verify this prediction, are well known. Brissot, Le Brun, &c. who have since been executed, were particularly charged by the adverse party with provoking the war with England. Robespierre, and those who succeeded, were not so desirous of involving

forced into a war because she could not be persuaded to an insurrection.—Perhaps it may be said, that the French have taken this part only for their own security, and to procure adherents in the common cause; but this is all I contend for—that the politics of the old government actuate the new, and that they have not, in abolishing courts and royalty, abolished the perfidious system of endeavouring to benefit, by creating distress and dissention among their neighbours.—Louvois supplied the Protestants in the Low Countries with money, while he persecuted them in France. The agents of the republic, more æconomical, yet directed by the same motives, eke out corruption by precepts of sedition, and arm the leaders of revolt with the rights of man; but, forgetting the maxim that charity should begin at home, in their zeal for the freedom of *other* countries, they leave no portion of it for their *own*!

Louis the Fourteenth over-ran Holland and the Palatinate to plant the white flag, and lay the inhabitants under contribution—the repub-

us in a foreign war, and their humane efforts were directed merely to excite a civil one.—The third article of accusation against Roland is, having sent twelve millions of livres to England, to assist in procuring a declaration of war.

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lic send an army to plant the tree of liberty, levy a *don patriotique*, and place garrisons in the towns, in order to preserve their freedom.—Kings have violated treaties from the desire of conquest—these virtuous republicans do it from the desire of *plunder*; and, previous to opening the Scheldt, the invasion of Holland was proposed as a means of paying the expences of the war. I have never heard that even the most ambitious Potentates ever pretended to extend their subjugation beyond the persons and property of the conquered; but these militant dogmatists claim an empire even over opinions, and insist that no people can be free or happy unless they regulate their ideas of freedom and happiness by the variable standard of the Jacobin club. Far from being of Hudibras's philosophy,* they seem to think the mind as tangible as the body, and that, with the assistance of an army, they may as soon lay one "by the heels" as the other.—Now this I conceive to be the worst of all tyrannies, nor have I seen it exceeded on the French theatre, though,

* Quoth he, one half of man, his mind,
Is, *sui juris*, unconfin'd,
And ne'er can be laid by the heels,
Whate'er the other moiety feels.

HUDIBRAS.

within

within the last year, the imagination of their poets has been peculiarly ingenious and inventive on this subject.—It is absurd to suppose this vain and overbearing disposition will cease when the French government is settled. The intrigues of the popular party began in England from the moment they attained power, and long before there was any reason to suspect the English would deviate from their plan of neutrality. If, then, the French cannot restrain this mischievous spirit while their own affairs are sufficient to occupy their utmost attention, it is natural to conclude, that, should they once become established, leisure and peace will make them dangerous to the tranquillity of all Europe. Other governments may be improved by time, but republics always degenerate; and if that which is in its original state of perfection exhibit already the maturity of vice, one cannot, without being more credulous than reasonable, hope any thing better from the future than what we have experienced from the past.—It is, indeed, unnecessary to detain you longer on this subject. You must, ere now, be perfectly convinced how far the revolutionary systems of France are favourable to the peace and happiness of other countries. I will only add a few details, which may assist you in judging of what advantage

advantage they have been to the French themselves, and whether, in changing the form of their government, they have amended its principles; or if, in “conquering” liberty, (as they express it,) they have really become free.

The situation of France has altered much within the last two months: the seat of power is less fluctuating, and the exercise more absolute—arbitrary measures are no longer incidental, but systematic—and a regular connection of dependent tyranny is established, beginning with the Jacobin clubs, and ending with the committees of the sections. A simple decree, for instance, has put all the men in the republic, (unmarried and without children,) from eighteen to forty-five, at the requisition of the Minister of War. A levy of three hundred thousand is to take place immediately: each department is responsible for the whole of a certain number to the Convention, the districts are answerable for their quota to the departments, the municipalities to the district, and the diligence of the whole is animated by itinerant members of the legislature, with the disposal of an armed force. The latter circumstance may seem to you incredible; yet is it nevertheless true, that most of the departments
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are under the jurisdiction of these sovereigns, whose authority is nearly unlimited. We have, at this moment, two deputies in the town, who arrest and imprison at their pleasure. One-and-twenty inhabitants of Amiens were seized a few nights ago, without any specific charge having been exhibited against them, and are still in confinement. The gates of the town are shut, and no one is permitted to pass or repass without an order from the municipality; and the observance of this is exacted even of those who reside in the suburbs. Farmers and country-people, who are on horseback, are obliged to have the features and complexion of their horses minuted on the passport with their own. Every person whom it is found convenient to call suspicious, is deprived of his arms; and private houses are disturbed during the night, (in opposition to a positive law,) under pretext of searching for refractory priests.—These regulations are not peculiar to this department, and you must understand them as conveying a general idea of what passes in every part of France.—I have yet to add, that letters are opened with impunity—that immense sums of assignats are created at the will of the Convention—that no one is excused mounting guard in person—and that all housekeepers,

and even lodgers, are burthened with the quartering of troops, sometimes as many as eight or ten, for weeks together.

You may now, I think, form a tolerable idea of the liberty that has accrued to the French from the revolution, the dethronement of the King, and the establishment of a republic. But, though the French suffer this despotism without daring to murmur openly, many a significant shrug and doleful whisper passes in secret, and this political discontent has even its appropriate language, which, though not very explicit, is perfectly understood.—Thus, when you hear one man say to another, “*Ab, mon Dieu, on est bien malheureux dans ce moment ici;*” or, “*Nous sommes dans une position tres critique—Je voudrois bien voir la fin de tout cela;*” you may be sure he languishes for the restoration of the monarchy, and hopes, with equal fervor, that he may live to see the Convention hanged. In these sort of conferences, however, evaporates all their courage. They own their country is undone, that they are governed by a set of *brigands*, go home and hide any set of valuables they have not already secreted, and receive with obsequious complaisance the next *visite domiciliaire*.

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The mass of the people, with as little energy, have more obstinacy, and are, of course, not quite so tractable. But, though they grumble and procrastinate, they do not resist; and their delays and demurs usually terminate in implicit submission,

The Deputy-commissioners, whom I have mentioned above, have been at Amiens some time, in order to promote the levying of recruits. On Sundays and holidays they summoned the inhabitants to attend at the cathedral, where they harangued them on the subject, called for vengeance on the coalesced despots, expatiated on the love of glory, and insisted on the *pleasure* of dying for one's country: while the people listened with vacant attention, amused themselves with the paintings, or adjourned in small committees to discuss the hardship of being obliged to fight without inclination.—Thus time elapsed, the military orations produced no effect, and no troops were raised: no one would enlist voluntarily, and all refused to settle it by lot, because, as they wisely observed, the lot must fall on somebody. Yet, notwithstanding the objection, the matter was at length decided by this last method. The decision had no sooner taken place, than another difficulty en-

fued—those who escaped acknowledged it was the best way that could be devised; but those who were destined to the frontiers refused to go. Various altercations, and excuses, and references, were the consequence; yet, after all this murmuring and evasion, the presence of the Commissioners and a few dragoons have arranged the business very pacifically; many are already gone, and the rest will (if the dragoons continue here) soon follow.

This, I assure you, is a just statement of the account between the Convention and the People: every thing is effected by fear—nothing by attachment; and the one is obeyed only because the other want courage to resist.—
Yours, &c.

Rouen, March 31.

ROUEN, like most of the great towns in France, is what is called decidedly aristocratic; that is, the rich are discontented because they are without security, and the poor because they want bread. But these complaints are not peculiar to large places; the causes of them
equally

equally exist in the smallest village, and the only difference which fixes the imputation of aristocracy on one more than the other, is, daring to murmur, or submitting in silence.

I must here remark to you, that the term aristocrat has much varied from its former signification. A year ago, aristocrat implied one who was an advocate for the privileges of the nobility, and a partizan of the ancient government—at present, a man is an aristocrat for entertaining exactly the same principles which at that time constituted a patriot; and, I believe, the computation is moderate, when I say, that more than three parts of the nation are aristocrats. The rich, who apprehend a violation of their property, are aristocrats—the merchants, who regret the stagnation of commerce, and distrust the credit of the assignats, are aristocrats—the small retailers, who are pillaged for not selling cheaper than they buy, and who find these outrages rather encouraged than repressed, are aristocrats—and even the poor, who murmur at the price of bread, and the numerous levies for the army, are, occasionally, aristocrats.

Besides all these, there are likewise various classes of moral aristocrats—such as the humane, who are averse from massacres and oppression—those who regret the loss of civil liberty—the devout, who tremble at the contempt for religion—the vain, who are mortified at the national degradation—and authors, who sigh for the freedom of the press.—When you consider this multiplicity of symptomatic indications, you will not be surprized that such numbers are pronounced in a state of disease; but our republican physicians will soon generalize these various species of aristocracy under the single description of all who have any thing to lose, and every one will be deemed plethoric who is not in a consumption. The people themselves, who *observe*, though they do not *reason*, begin to have an idea that property exposes the safety of the owner, and that the legislature is less inexorable when guilt is unproductive, than when the conviction of a criminal comprehends the forfeiture of an estate.—A poor tradesman was lamenting to me yesterday that he had neglected an offer of going to live in England; and when I told him I thought he was very fortunate in having done so, as he would have been declared an emigrant, he replied, laughing, “*Moi émigré qui n’ai pas un sol!*”—No, no; they don’t

don't make emigrants of those who are worth nothing. And this was not said with any intended irreverence to the Convention, but with the simplicity which really conceived the wealth of the emigrants to be the cause of the severity exercised against them.

The commercial and political evils of a vast circulation of assignats have been often discussed, but I have never yet known the matter considered in what is, perhaps, its most serious point of view—I mean its influence on the habits and morals of the people. Wherever I go, especially in large towns like this, the mischief is evident, and, I fear, irremediable. That œconomy, which was one of the most valuable characteristics of the French, is now comparatively disregarded. The people, who receive what they earn in a currency they hold in contempt, are more anxious to spend than to save; and those who formerly hoarded *six liards* or *twelve sols* pieces with great care, would think it folly to hoard an assignat, whatever its nominal value. Hence the lower class of females dissipate their wages on useless finery; men frequent public-houses, and game for larger sums than before; little shop-keepers, instead of amassing their profits, become more luxurious

in their table; public places are always full; and those who used, in a dress becoming their station, to occupy the “parquet” or “parterre,” now, decorated with paste, pins, gauze, and galloon, fill the boxes;—and all this destructive prodigality is excused to others and themselves “*par ce que ce n’est que du papier.*”—It is vain to persuade them to economize what they think a few weeks may render valueless; and such is the evil of a circulation so totally discredited, that profusion assumes the merit of precaution, extravagance the plea of necessity, and those who were not lavish by habit become so through their eagerness to part with their paper. The buried gold and silver will again be brought forth, and the merchant and the politician forget the mischief of the assignats. But what can compensate for the injury done to the people? What is to restore their ancient frugality, or banish their acquired wants? It is not to be expected that the return of specie will diminish the inclination for luxury, or that the human mind can be regulated by the national finance; on the contrary, it is rather to be feared, that habits of expence which owe their introduction to the paper will remain when the paper is annihilated; that, though money may become more scarce, the propensities of which it supplies

plies the indulgence will not be less forcible, and that those who have no other resources for their accustomed gratifications will but too often find one in the sacrifice of their integrity.— Thus, the corruption of manners will be succeeded by the corruption of morals, and the dishonesty of one sex, with the licentiousness of the other, produce consequences much worse than any imagined by the abstracted calculations of the politician, or the selfish ones of the merchant. Age will be often without solace, sickness without alleviation, and infancy without support; because some would not amass for themselves, nor others for their children, the profits of their labour in a representative sign of uncertain value.

I do not pretend to assert that these are the natural effects of a paper circulation—doubtless, when supported by high credit, and an extensive commerce, it must have many advantages; but this was not the case in France—the measure was adopted in a moment of revolution, and when the credit of the country, never very considerable, was precarious and degraded—it did not flow from the exuberance of commerce, but the artifices of party—it never presumed,
for

for a moment, on the confidence of the people—its reception was forced, and its emission too profuse not to be alarming.—I know it may be answered, that the assignats do not depend upon an imaginary appreciation, but really represent a large mass of national wealth, particularly in the domains of the clergy: yet, perhaps, it is this very circumstance which has tended most to discredit them. Had their credit rested only on the solvency of the nation, though they had not been greatly coveted, still they would have been less distrusted; people would not have apprehended their abolition on a change of government, nor that the systems adopted by one party might be reversed by another. Indeed we may add, that an experiment of this kind does not begin auspiciously when grounded on confiscation and seizures, which it is probable more than half the French considered as sacrilege and robbery; nor could they be very anxious to possess a species of wealth which they made it a motive of conscience to hope would never be of any value.—But if the original creation of assignats were objectionable, the subsequent creations cannot but augment the evil. I have already described to you the effects visible at present, and those to be apprehended in

in future—others may result from the new inundation,* which it is not possible to conjecture; but if the mischiefs should be real, in proportion as a part of the wealth which this paper is said to represent is imaginary, their extent cannot easily be exaggerated. Perhaps you will be of this opinion, when you recollect that one of the funds which form the security of this vast sum is the gratitude of the Flemings for their liberty; and if this reimbursement be to be made according to the specimen the French army have experienced in their retreat, I doubt much if the Convention will be disposed to advance any farther claims on it; for, it seems, the inhabitants of the Low Countries have been so little sensible of the benefits bestowed on them, that even the peasants seize on any weapons nearest hand, and drub and pursue the retrograding armies as they would wild beasts; and though, as Dumourier observes in one of his dispatches, our revolution is intended to favour the country people “*c’est cependant les gens de campagne qui s’arment contre nous, et le tocsin sonne de toutes parts;*” so that the French will, in fact, have created a public debt of so singular a nature, that every

* 1200 millions—50 millions sterling.

one will avoid as much as possible making any demand of the capital.

I have already been more diffuse than I intended on the subject of finance; but I beg you to observe, that I do not affect to calculate, or speculate, and that I reason only from facts which are daily within my notice, and which, as tending to operate on the morals of the people, are naturally included in the plan I proposed to myself.

I have been here but a few days, and intend returning to-morrow. I left Mrs. D—— very little better, and the disaffection of Dumourier, which I just now learn, may oblige us to remove to some place not on the route to Paris.— Every one looks alert and important, and a physiognomist may perceive that regret is not the prevailing sentiment—

“ We now begin to speak in tropes,

“ And, by our fears, express our hopes.”

The Jacobins are said to be apprehensive, which augurs well; for, certainly, next to the happiness of good people, one desires the punishment of the bad.

Amiens, April 7.

IF the sentiments of the people towards their present government had been problematical before, the visible effect of Dumourier's conduct would afford an ample solution of the problem. That indifference about public affairs which the prospect of an established despotism had begun to create has vanished—all is hope and expectation—the doors of those who retail the newspapers are assailed by people too impatient to read them—each with his gazette in his hand listens eagerly to the verbal circulation, and then holds a secret conference with his neighbour, and calculates how long it may be before Dumourier can reach Paris. A fortnight ago the name of Dumourier was not uttered but in a tone of harshness and contempt, and if ever it excited any thing like complacency, it was when he announced defeats and losses. Now he is spoken of with a significant modulation of voice, it is discovered that he has great talents, and his popularity with the army is descanted upon with a mysterious air of suppressed satisfaction.—Those who were extremely apprehensive lest part of the General's troops should be driven this way by the successes of the enemy, seem to talk with perfect composure of their taking
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the same route to attack the capital; while others, who would have been unwilling to receive either Dumourier or his army as peaceful fugitives, will be "nothing loath" to admit them as conquerors. From all I can learn, these dispositions are very general, and, indeed, the actual tyranny is so great, and the perspective so alarming, that any means of deliverance must be acceptable. But, whatever may be the event, though I cannot be personally interested, if I thought Dumourier really proposed to establish a good government, humanity would render one anxious for his success; for it is not to be disguised, that France is at this moment (as the General himself expressed it) under the joint dominion of "*imbecilles*" and "*brigands*."*

It is possible, that at this moment the whole army is disaffected, and that the fortified towns are prepared to surrender. It is also certain, that Brittany is in revolt, and that many other departments are little short of it; yet you will not very easily conceive what may have occupied the Convention during part of this important crisis—nothing less than inventing a dress for

* Idiots and robbers,

their

their Commissioners! But, as Sterne says, "it is the spirit of the nation;" and I recollect no circumstance during the whole progress of the revolution (however serious) that has not been mixed with frivolities of this kind.

I know not what effect this new costume may produce on the rebels or the enemy, but I confess it appears to me more ludicrous than formidable, especially when a representative happens to be of the shape and features of the one we have here. Saladin, deputy for this department, and an advocate of the town of Amiens, has already invested himself with this armour of inviolability; "strange figure in such strange habiliments," that one is tempted to forget that Baratraria and the government of Sancho are the creation of fancy. Imagine to yourself a short fat man, of fallow complexion and small eyes, with a sash of white, red, and blue round his waist, a black belt with a sword suspended across his shoulders, and a round hat turned up before, with three feathers of the national colours: "even such a man" is our representative, who harangues publicly in this accoutrement, and exercises a more despotic authority than most Princes in Europe.—He is accompanied by another deputy, who was what

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is called a *Père de l'Oratoire* before the revolution—that is, in a station nearly approaching to that of an under-master at our public schools; only that the seminaries to which these were attached being very numerous, those employed in them were little considered. They wore the habit, and were subject to the same restrictions, as the Clergy, but were at liberty to quit the profession and marry, if they chose.—I have been more particular in describing this class of men, because they have every where taken an active and successful part in perverting and misleading the people: they are in the clubs, or the municipalities, in the Convention, and in all elective administrations, and have been in most places remarkable for their sedition and violence.

Several reasons may be assigned for the influence and conduct of men whose situation and habits, on a first view, seem to oppose both. In the first ardour of reform it was determined, that all the ancient modes of education should be abolished; small temporary pensions were allotted to the Professors of Colleges, and their admission to the exercise of similar functions in the intended new system was left to future decision. From this time the
disbanded

disbanded *oratorians*, who knew it would be vain to resist popular authority, endeavoured to share in it; or, at least, by becoming zealous partizans of the revolution, to establish their claims to any offices or emoluments which might be substituted for those they had been deprived of. They enrolled themselves with the Jacobins, courted the populace, and, by the talent of pronouncing Roman names with emphasis, and the study of rhetorical attitudes, they became of consequence among associates who were ignorant, or necessary to those that were designing.

The little information generally possessed by the middling classes of life in France is also another cause of the comparative importance of those whose professions had, in this respect, raised them something above the common level. People of condition, liberally educated, have unfortunately abandoned public affairs for some time; so that the incapacity of some, and the pride or despondency of others, have, in a manner, left the nation to the guidance of pedants, incendiaries, and adventurers. Perhaps also the animosity with which the description of men I allude to pursued every thing attached to the ancient government, may, in some degree, have proceeded from a desire of revenge and

VOL. I. R retaliation.

retaliation. They were not, it must be confessed, treated formerly with the regard due to persons whose profession was in itself useful and respectable; and the wounds of vanity are not easily cured, nor the vindictiveness of little minds easily satisfied.

From the conduct and popular influence of these *Pères de l'Oratoire*, some truths may be deduced not altogether useless even to a country not liable to such violent reforms. It affords an example of the danger arising from those sudden and arbitrary innovations, which, by depriving any part of the community of their usual means of living, and substituting no other, tempt them to indemnify themselves by preying, in different ways, on their fellow-citizens. The daring and ignorant often become depredators of private property; while those who have more talents, and less courage, endeavour to succeed by the artifices which conciliate public favour. I am not certain whether the latter are not to be most dreaded of the two, for those who make a trade of the confidence of the people seldom fail to corrupt them—they find it more profitable to flatter their passions than to enlighten their understandings; and a demagogue of this kind, who obtains

an office by exciting one popular insurrection, will make no scruple of maintaining himself in it by another. An inference may likewise be drawn of the great necessity of cultivating such a degree of useful knowledge in the middle order of society, as may not only prevent their being deceived by interested adventurers themselves, but enable them to instruct the people in their true interests, and rescue them from becoming the instruments, and finally the victims, of fraud and imposture.—The insult and oppression which the nobility frequently experience from those who have been promoted by the revolution, will, I trust, be a useful lesson in future to the great, who may be inclined to arrogate too much from adventitious distinctions, to forget that the earth we tread upon may one day overwhelm us, and that the meanest of mankind may do us an injury which it is not in the power even of the most exalted to shield us from.

The inquisition begins to grow so strict, that I have thought it necessary to day to bury a translation of Burke.—In times of ignorance and barbarity, it was criminal to read the Bible, and our English author is prohibited for a similar reason—that is, to conceal from the people

the errors of those who direct them: and, indeed, Mr. Burke has written some truths, which it is of much more importance for the Convention to conceal, than it could be to the Catholic priests to monopolize the divine writings.—As far as it was possible, Mr. Burke has shown himself a prophet: if he has not been completely so, it was because he had a benevolent heart, and is the native of a free country. By the one, he was prevented from imagining the cruelties the French have been capable of; by the other, the extreme despotism they endure.

April 20.

BEFORE these halcyon days of freedom, the supremacy of Paris was little felt in the provinces, except in dictating a new fashion in dress, an improvement in the art of cookery, or the invention of a minuet. At present our imitations of the capital are something more serious; and if our obedience be not quite so *voluntary*, it is much more *implicit*. Instead of receiving fashions from the Court, we take them now from the *Dames des Halles*, and the municipality; and it must be allowed, that the imaginations

nations of our new sovereigns much exceed those of the old in force and originality.

The mode of pillaging the shops, for instance, was first devised by the Parisian ladies, and has lately been adopted with great success in the departments: the *visite domiciliaire*, also, which I look upon as a most ingenious effort of fancy, is an emanation from the commune of Paris, and has had an universal run.—But it would be vain to attempt enumerating all the obligations of this kind which we owe to the indulgence of that *virtuous* city: our last importation, however, is of so singular a nature, that, were we not daily assured all the liberty in the world centers in Paris, I should be doubtful as to its tendency. It has lately been decreed, that every house in the republic shall have fixed on the outside of the door, in legible characters, the name, age, birth-place, and profession of its inhabitants. Not the poorest cottager, nor those who are too old or too young for action, nor even unmarried ladies, are exempt from thus proclaiming the abstract of their history to passers-by.—The reigning party judge very wisely, that all those who are not already their enemies may become so, and that those who are unable to take a part them-

selves may excite others : but, whatever may be the intention of this measure, it is impossible to conceive any thing which could better serve the purposes of an arbitrary government ; it places every individual in the republic within the immediate reach of informers and spies—it points out those who are of an age to serve in the army—those who have sought refuge in one department from the persecutions of another—and, in short, whether a victim is pursued by the denunciation of private malice, or political suspicion, it renders escape almost impracticable.

We have had two domiciliary visits within the last fortnight—one to search for arms, the other under pretext of ascertaining the number of troops each house is capable of lodging. But this was only the pretext, because the municipalities always quarter troops as they think proper, without considering whether you have room or not ; and the real object of this inquiry was to observe if the inhabitants answered to the lists placed on the doors.—Mrs. D— was ill in bed, but you must not imagine such a circumstance deterred these gallant republicans from entering her room with an armed force, to calculate how many soldiers might be lodged

lodged in the bedchamber of a sick female ! The French, indeed, had never, in my remembrance, any pretensions to delicacy, or even decency, and they are certainly not improved in these respects by the revolution.

It is curious in walking the streets, to observe the devices of the several classes of aristocracy; for it is not to be disguised, that since the hope from Dumourier has vanished, though the disgust of the people may be increased, their terror is also greater than ever, and the departments near Paris have no resource but silent submission. Every one, therefore, obeys the *letter* of the decrees with the diligence of fear, while they elude the *spirit* of them with all the ingenuity of hatred.—The rich, for example, who cannot entirely divest themselves of their remaining *hauteur*, exhibit a fullen compliance on a small piece of paper, written in a small hand, and placed at the very extreme of the height allowed by the law. Some fix their bills so as to be half covered by a shutter; others fasten them only with wafers, so that the wind, detaching one or two corners, makes it impossible to read the rest.* Many who have courts

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* This contrivance became so common, that an article was obliged to be added to the decree, importing, that whenever the

or passages to their houses, put their names on the half of a gate which they leave open, so that the writing is not perceptible but to those who enter. But those who are most afraid, or most decidedly aristocrats, subjoin to their registers, "*All good republicans :*" or, "*Vive la republique, une et indivisible.*" Some likewise, who are in public offices, or shopkeepers who are very timid, and afraid of pillage, or are ripe for a counter-revolution, have a sheet half the size of the door, decorated with red caps, tri-coloured ribbons, and flaming sentences ending in "*Death or Liberty !*"

If, however, the French government confined itself to these petty acts of despotism, I would endeavour to be reconciled to it; but I really begin to have serious apprehensions, not so much for our safety as our tranquillity, and if I considered only myself, I should not hesitate to return to England. Mrs. D—— is too ill to travel far at present, and her dread of crossing the sea makes her less disposed to think our situation here hazardous or ineligible. Mr. D——, too, who, without being a republican

the papers were damaged or effaced by the weather, or deranged by the wind, the inhabitants should replace them, under a penalty.

or a partizan of the present system, has always been a friend to the first revolution, is unwilling to believe the Convention so bad as there is every reason to suppose it. I therefore let my judgement yield to my friendship, and, as I cannot prevail on them to depart, the danger which may attend our remaining is an additional reason for my not quitting them.

The national perfidy which has always distinguished France among the other countries of Europe, seems now not to be more a diplomatic principle, than a rule of domestic government. It is so extended and generalized, that an individual is as much liable to be deceived and betrayed by confiding in a decree, as a foreign power would be by relying on the faith of a treaty.—An hundred and twenty priests, above sixty years of age, who had not taken the oaths, but who were allowed to remain by the same law that banished those who were younger, have been lately arrested, and are confined together in a house which was once a college. The people did not behold this act of cruelty with indifference, but, awed by an armed force, and the presence of the Commissioners of the Convention, they could only follow the priests to their prison with silent regret.

regret and internal horror. They, however, venture even now to mark their attachment, by taking all opportunities of seeing them, and supplying them with necessaries, which it is not very difficult to do, as they are guarded by the Bourgeois, who are generally inclined to favour them. I asked a woman to-day if she still contrived to have access to the priests, and she replied, "*Ab, oui, il y a encore de la facilité, parce que l'on ne trouve pas des gardes ici qui ne sont pas pour eux.*" Thus, even the most minute and best organized tyranny may be eluded; and, indeed, if all the agents of this government acted in the spirit of its decrees, it would be insupportable even to a native of Turkey or Japan. But if some have still a remnant of humanity left, there are a sufficient number who execute the laws as unfeelingly as they are conceived.

When these poor priests were to be removed from their several houses, it was found necessary to dislodge the Bishop of Amiens, who had for some time occupied the place fixed on for their reception. The Bishop had notice given him at twelve o'clock in the day to relinquish his lodging before evening; yet the Bishop of Amiens is a constitutional Prelate, and had, before the revolution, the cure of a large

large parish at Paris; nor was it without much persuasion that he accepted the see of Amiens. In the severe winter of 1789 he disposed of his plate and library, (the latter of which was said to be one of the best private collections in Paris,) to purchase bread for the poor. “But Time hath a wallet on his back, wherein he puts alms for oblivion;” and the charities of the Bishop could not shield him from the contempt and insult which pursue his profession.

I have been much distressed within the last few days on account of my friend Mad. de B——. I subjoin a translation of a letter I have just received from her, as it will convey to you hereafter a tolerable specimen of French liberty.

“Maison d'Aurêt, at ——.

“I DID not write to you, my dear friend, at the time I promised, and you will perceive, by the date of this, that I have had too good an excuse for my negligence. I have been here almost a week, and my spirits are still so much disordered, that I can with difficulty recollect myself enough to relate the circumstances of our unfortunate situation; but as it is possible you might become acquainted with them by some other means, I rather determined to give
you

you a few lines than suffer you to be alarmed by false or exaggerated reports.—About two o'clock on Monday morning last our servants were called up, and, on their opening the door, the house was immediately filled with armed men, some of whom began searching the rooms, while others came to our bedchamber, and informed us we were arrested by order of the department, and that we must rise and accompany them to prison.—It is not easy to describe the effect of such a mandate on people who, having nothing to reproach themselves with, could not be prepared for it. As soon as we were a little recovered from our first terrors, we endeavoured to obey, and begged they would indulge us by retiring a few moments till I had put my clothes on; but neither my embarrassment, nor the screams of the child; neither decency nor humanity, could prevail. They would not even permit my maid to enter the room; and, amidst this scene of disorder, I was obliged to dress myself and the terrified infant. When this unpleasant task was finished, a general examination of our house and papers took place, and lasted until six in the evening: nothing, however, tending in the remotest degree to criminate us was found, but we were nevertheless conducted to prison, and God knows how

how long we are likely to remain here. The denunciation against us being secret, and not being able to learn either our crime or our accusers, it is difficult for us to take any measures for our enlargement. We cannot defend ourselves against a charge of which we are ignorant, nor combat the validity of a witness, who is not only allowed to remain secret, but is paid perhaps for his information.*

“ We most probably owe our misfortune to some discarded servant or personal enemy, for I believe you are convinced we have not merited it either by our discourse or our actions: if we had, the charge would have been specific; but we have reason to imagine it is nothing more than the indeterminate and general charge of being aristocrats.—I did not see my mother or sister all the day we were arrested, nor till the evening of the next: the one was engaged perhaps with *Rosine and the Angola*, who were indisposed, and the other would not forego her usual card party. Many of our friends likewise have forbore to approach us, lest their apparent interest in our fate should involve themselves, and really the

* At this time informers were paid from fifty to an hundred livres for each accusation.

alarm is so general, that I can, without much effort, forgive them.—You will be pleased to learn, that the greatest civilities I have received in this unpleasant situation, have been from some of your countrymen, who are our fellow-prisoners: they are only poor sailors, but they are truly kind and attentive, and do us various little services that render us more comfortable than we otherwise should be, for we have no servants here, having preferred to leave them to take care of our property. The second night we were here, these good creatures, who lodge in the next room, were rather merry, and awoke the child; but as they found, by its cries, that their gaiety had occasioned me some trouble, I have observed ever since, that they walk softly, and avoid making the least noise, after the little prisoner is gone to rest. I believe they are pleased with me because I speak their language, and they are still more delighted with your young favourite, who is so well amused, that he begins to forget the gloom of the place, which at first terrified him extremely.

“One of our companions is a nonjuring priest, who has been imprisoned under circumstances which make me almost ashamed of my country.—After having escaped from a neighbouring department,

department, he procured himself a lodging in this town, and for some time lived very peaceably, till a woman, who suspected his profession, became extremely importunate with him to confess her. The poor man, for several days, refused, telling her, that he did not consider himself as a priest, nor wished to be known as such, nor to infringe the law which excluded him. The woman, however, still continued to persecute him, alledging, that her conscience was distressed, and that her peace depended on her being able to confess *in the right way*. At length he suffered himself to be prevailed upon, the woman received an hundred livres for informing against him, and, perhaps, the priest will be condemned to the Guillotine.*

“ I will make no reflection on this act, nor on the system of paying informers—your heart will have already anticipated all I could say. I will only add, that if you determine to remain in France, you must observe a degree of circumspection which you may not hitherto have thought necessary. Do not depend on your innocence, nor even trust to common precautions—every day furnishes examples that both are unavailing.—

* He was executed some time after.

Adieu—

Adieu—my husband offers you his respects, and your little friend embraces you sincerely. As soon as any change in our favour takes place, I will communicate it to you; but you had better not venture to write.—I entrust this to Louison's mother, who is going through Amiens, as it would be unsafe to send it by the post.—Again adieu. Yours,

“ADELAIDE DE ———.”

Amiens.

IT is observable, that we examine less scrupulously the pretensions of a nation to any particular excellence, than we do those of an individual. The reason of this is, probably, that our self-love is as much gratified by admitting the one, as in rejecting the other. When we allow the claims of a whole people, we are flattered with the idea of being above narrow prejudices, and of possessing an enlarged and liberal mind; but if a single individual arrogate to himself any exclusive superiority, our own pride immediately becomes opposed to his, and we seem but to vindicate our judgement in degrading such presumption. I can conceive no other causes for our having so long acquiesced in the claims of

of the French to pre-eminent good breeding, in an age when, I believe, no person acquainted with both nations can discover any thing to justify them. If indeed politeness consisted in the repetition of a certain routine of phrases, unconnected with the mind or action, I might be obliged to decide against our country; but while decency makes a part of good manners, or feeling is preferable to a mechanical jargon, I am inclined to think the English have a merit more than they have hitherto ascribed to themselves. Do not suppose, however, that I am going to descant on the old imputations of "French flattery," and "French insincerity;" for I am far from concluding that civil behaviour gives one a right to expect kind offices, or that a man is false because he pays a compliment, and refuses a service: I only wish to infer that an impertinence is not less an impertinence because it is accompanied by a certain set of words, and that a people, who are indelicate to excess, cannot properly be denominated "*a polite people*."

A French man or woman, with no other apology than "*permettez moi*," will take a book out of your hand, look over any thing you are reading, and ask you a thousand questions re-

lative to your most private concerns—they will enter your room, even your bedchamber, without knocking, place themselves between you and the fire, or take hold of your clothes to guess what they cost; and they deem these acts of rudeness sufficiently qualified by “*Je demande bien de pardons.*”—They are fully convinced that the English all eat with their knives, and I have often heard this discussed with much self-complacence by those who usually shared the labours of the repast between a fork and their fingers. Our custom also of using water-glasses after dinner is an object of particular censure; yet whoever dines at a French table must frequently observe, that many of the guests might benefit by such ablutions, and their napkins always testify that some previous application would be by no means superfluous. Nothing is more common than to hear physical derangements, disorders, and their remedies, expatiated upon by the parties concerned amidst a room full of people, and that with so much minuteness of description, that a foreigner, without being very fastidious, is on some occasions apt to feel very unpleasant sympathies. There are scarcely any of the ceremonies of a lady's toilette more a mystery to one sex than the other, and men and their wives, who scarcely
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eat at the same table, are in this respect grossly familiar. The conversation in most societies partakes of this indecency, and the manners of an English female are in danger of becoming contaminated, while she is only endeavouring to suffer without pain the customs of those she has been taught to consider as models of politeness.

Whether you examine the French in their houses or in public, you are every where stricken with the same want of delicacy, propriety, and cleanliness. The streets are mostly so filthy, that it is perilous to approach the walls. The insides of the churches are often disgusting, in spite of the advertisements that are placed in them to request the forbearance of phthifical persons: the service does not prevent those who attend from going to and fro with the same irreverence as if the church were empty, and, in the most solemn part of the mass, a woman is suffered to importune you for a *liard*, as the price of the chair you sit on. At the theatres an actor or actresses frequently coughs and expectorates on the stage, in a manner one should think highly unpardonable before one's most intimate friends in England, though this habit is very common to all the French. The
s 2 inns

inns abound with filth of every kind, and though the owners of them are generally civil enough, their notions of what is decent are so very different from ours, that an English traveller is not soon reconciled to them. In short, it would be impossible to enumerate all that in my opinion excludes the French from the character of a well-bred people.—Swift, who seems to have been gratified by the contemplation of physical impurity, might have done the subject justice; but I confess I am not displeased to feel that, after my long and frequent residences in France, I am still unqualified. So little are these people susceptible of delicacy, propriety, and decency, that they do not even use the words in the sense we do, nor have they any others expressive of the same meaning.—But if they are deficient in the external forms of politeness, they are infinitely more so in that politeness which may be called mental. The simple and unerring rule of never preferring one's self, is to them more difficult of comprehension than the most difficult problem in Euclid: in small things as well as great, their own interest, their own gratification, is their leading principle; and the cold flexibility which enables them to clothe this selfish system in "fair forms," is what they call politeness.

My

My ideas on this subject are not recent, but they occurred to me with additional force on the perusal of Mad. de B——'s letter. The behaviour of some of the poorest and least-informed class of our countrymen forms a striking contrast with that of the people who arrested her, and even her own friends: the unaffected attention of the one, and the brutality and neglect of the other, are, perhaps, more just examples of English and French manners than you may have hitherto imagined. I do not, however, pretend to say that the latter are all gross and brutal, but I am myself convinced that, generally speaking, they are an unfeeling people.

I beg you to remember, that when I speak of the *dispositions* and *character* of the French, my opinions are the result of *general* observation, and are applicable to all ranks; but when my remarks are on *habits* and *manners*, they describe only those classes which are properly called the nation. The higher noblesse, and those attached to courts, so nearly resemble each other in all countries, that they are necessarily excepted in these delineations, which are intended to mark the distinguishing features of a people at large: for, assuredly, when the

French assert, and their neighbours repeat, that they are a polite nation, it is not meant that those who have important offices or dignified appellations are polite. They found their claims on their superiority as a people, and it is in this light I consider them. My examples are chiefly drawn, not from the very inferior, nor from the most eminent ranks; neither from the retailer of a shop, nor the claimant of a “*tabouret*,*” or “*les grandes ou petites entrées*,” but from the gentry, those of easy fortunes, merchants, &c.—in fact, from people of that degree which it would be fair to cite as what may be called a genteel society in England.

This cessation of intercourse with our country dispirits me, and as it will probably continue some time, I shall amuse myself by noting more particularly the little occurrences which may not reach your public prints, but which tend more than great events to mark both the spirit of the government and that of the people.—Perhaps you may be ignorant that the prohibi-

* The *tabouret* was a stool allowed to the Ladies of the Court particularly distinguished by rank or favour, when in presence of the Royal Family.—“*Les entrées*” gave a familiar access to the King and Queen.

tion of the English mails was not by a decree of the Convention, but by a simple order of its Commissioners; and I have some reason to think that even they acted at the instigation of an individual who harbours a mean and pitiful dislike to England and its inhabitants.—
Yours, &c.

May 18.

NEAR six weeks ago a decree was passed by the Convention, obliging all strangers, who had not purchased national property, or who did not exercise some profession, to give security to the amount of half their supposed fortune, and under these conditions they were to receive a certificate, allowing them to reside, and were promised the protection of the laws. The administrators of the departments, who perceive that they become odious by executing the decrees of the Convention, begin to relax much of their diligence, and it is not till long after a law is promulgated, and their personal fear operates as a stimulant, that they seriously enforce obedience to these mandates. This morning, however, we were summoned by the committee of our section (or ward) in order to

comply with the terms of the decree, and had I been directed only by my own judgement, I should have given the preference to an immediate return to England; but Mrs. D—— is yet ill, and Mr. D—— is disposed to continue. In vain have I quoted “how fickle France was branded ’midst the nations of the earth for perfidy and breach of public faith;” in vain have I reasoned upon the injustice of a government that first allured strangers to remain by insidious offers of protection, and now subjects them to conditions which many may find it difficult to subscribe to: Mr. D—— wishes to see our situation in the most favourable point of view: he argues upon the *moral impossibility* of our being liable to any inconvenience, and persists in believing that one government may act with treachery towards another, yet, distinguishing between falsehood and meanness, maintain its faith with individuals—in short, we have concluded a sort of treaty, by which we are bound, under the forfeiture of a large sum, to behave peaceably and submit to the laws. The government, in return, empowers us to reside, and promises protection and hospitality.

It is to be observed, that the spirit of this regulation depends upon those it affects producing

ducing fix witnesses of their "*civisme* ;*" yet so little interest do the people take on these occasions, that our witnesses were neighbours we had scarcely ever seen, and even one was a man who happened to be casually passing by. These committees, which form the last link of a chain of despotism, are composed of low tradesmen and day-labourers, with an attorney, or some person that can read and write, at their head, as president. Priests and nobles, with all that are related, or anywise attached, to them, are excluded by the law; and it is understood that true *sans-culottes* only should be admitted.—With all these precautions, the indifference and hatred of the people to their government is so general, that, perhaps, there are few places where this regulation is executed so as to answer the purposes of the jealous tyranny that conceived it. The members of these committees seem to exact no farther compliances than such as are absolutely necessary to the mere form of the proceeding, and to secure themselves from the imputation of disobedience;

* Though the meaning of this word is obvious, we have no one that is exactly synonymous to it. The Convention intend by it an attachment to their government: but the people do not trouble themselves about the *meaning* of words--- they measure their unwilling obedience by the letter.

and

and are very little concerned whether the real design of the legislature be accomplished or not. This negligence, or ill-will, which prevails in various instances, tempers, in some degree, the effects of that restless suspicion which is the usual concomitant of an uncertain, but arbitrary power. The affections or prejudices that surround a throne, by ensuring the safety of the Monarch, engage him to clemency, and the laws of a mild government are, for the most part, enforced with exactness; but a new and precarious authority, which neither imposes on the understanding nor interests the heart, which is supported only by a palpable and unadorned tyranny, is in its nature severe, and it becomes the common cause of the people to counteract the measures of a despotism which they are unable to resist.—This (as I have before had occasion to observe) renders the condition of the French less insupportable, but it is by no means sufficient to banish the fears of a stranger who has been accustomed to look for security, not from a relaxation or disregard of the laws, but from their efficacy; not from the characters of those who execute them, but from the rectitude with which they are formed.—What would you think in England, if you were obliged to contemplate with dread the three
branches

branches of your legislature, and depend for the protection of your person and property on soldiers and constables? Yet such is nearly the state we are in; and indeed a system of injustice and barbarism gains ground so fast, that almost any apprehension is justified.—The *Tribunal Revolutionnaire* has already condemned a servant maid for her political opinions, and one of the Judges of this tribunal lately introduced a man to the Jacobins, with high panegyrics, because, as he alledged, he had greatly contributed to the condemnation of a criminal. The same Judge likewise apologized for having as yet sent but a small number to the Guillotine, and promises, that, on the first appearance of a “*Brissotine*” before him, he will show him no mercy.

When the minister of public justice thus avows himself the agent of a party, a government, however recent its formation, must be far advanced in depravity; and the corruption of those who are the interpreters of the law has usually been the last effort of expiring power.

My friends, Monf. and Mad. de B——, are released from their confinement; not, as you might

might expect, by proving their innocence, but by the efforts of an individual, who had more weight than their accuser: and, far from obtaining satisfaction for the injury they have received, they are obliged to accept as a favour the liberty they were deprived of by malice and injustice. They will, most probably, never be acquainted with the nature of the charges brought against them, and their accuser will escape with impunity, and, perhaps, meet with reward.

All the French papers are filled with descriptions of the enthusiasm with which the young men “start to arms*” at the voice of their country; yet it is very certain, that this enthusiasm is of so subtle and aerial a form as to be perceivable only to those who are interested in discovering it. In some places these enthusiastic warriors continue to hide themselves—from others they are escorted to the place of their destination by nearly an equal number of dragoons; and no one, I believe, who can procure money to pay another, is disposed to go himself. This is sufficiently proved by the sums demanded by those who engage as substitutes: last year from three to five hundred livres was given;

* Offian.

at present no one will take less than eight hundred or a thousand, besides being furnished with clothes, &c. The only real volunteers are the sons of aristocrats, and the relations of emigrants, who, sacrificing their principles to their fears, hope, by enlisting in the army, to protect their estates and families: those likewise who have lucrative employments, and are afraid of losing them, affect great zeal, and expect to purchase impunity for civil speculation at home, by the military services of their children abroad.

This, I assure you, is the real state of that enthusiasm which occasions such an expence of eloquence to our gazette-writers; but these fallacious accounts are not like the ephemeral deceits of your party prints in England, the effect of which is destroyed in a few hours by an opposite assertion. None here are bold enough to contradict what their sovereigns would *have* believed; and a town or district, driven almost to revolt by the present system of recruiting, consents very willingly to be described as marching to the frontiers with martial ardour, and burning to combat "*les esclaves des tyrans*!" By these artifices, one department is misled with regard to the dispositions of another, and if they do
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not excite to emulation, they, at least, repress by fear; and, probably, many are reduced to submission, who would resist, were they not doubtful of the support and union of their neighbours. Every possible precaution is taken to prevent any connection between the different departments—people who are not known cannot obtain passports without the recommendation of two housekeepers—you must give an account of the business you go upon, of the carriage you mean to travel in, whether it has two wheels or four; all of which must be specified in your passport: and you cannot send your baggage from one town to another without the risk of having it searched. All these things are so disgusting and troublesome, that I begin to be quite of a different opinion from Brutus, and should certainly prefer being a slave among a free people, than thus be tormented with the recollection that I am a native of England in a land of slavery. Whatever liberty the French might have acquired by their first revolution, it is now much like Sir John Cutler's worsted stockings, so torn, and worn, and disguised by patchings and mendings, that the original texture is not discoverable.—Yours, &c.

June 3.

WE have been three days without receiving newspapers; but we learn from the reports of the courier, that the Brissotines are overthrown, that many of them have been arrested, and several escaped to raise adherents in the departments. I, however, doubt much if their success will be very general: the people have little preference between Brissot and Marat, Condorcet and Robespierre, and are not greatly solicitous about the names or even principles of those who govern them—they are not yet accustomed to take that lively interest in public events which is the effect of a popular constitution. In England every thing is a subject of debate and contest, but here they wait in silence the result of any political measure or party dispute; and, without entering into the merits of the cause, adopt whatever is successful. While the King was yet alive, the news of Paris was eagerly sought after, and every disorder of the metropolis created much alarm: but one would almost suppose that even curiosity had ceased at his death, for I have observed no subsequent event (except the defection of Dumourier) make any very serious impression. We hear, therefore, with great composure, the present triumph of the
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more violent republicans, and suffer without impatience this interregnum of news, which is to continue until the Convention shall have determined in what manner the intelligence of their proceedings shall be related to the departments. The great solicitude of the people is now rather about their *physical* existence than their *political* one—provisions are become enormously dear, and bread very scarce: our servants often wait two hours at the baker's, and then return without bread for breakfast. I hope, however, the scarcity is rather artificial than real. It is generally supposed to be occasioned by the unwillingness of the farmers to sell their corn for paper. Some measures have been adopted with an intention of remedying this evil, though the origin of it is beyond the reach of decrees. It originates in that distrust of government which reconciles one part of the community to starving the other, under the idea of self-preservation. While every individual persists in establishing it as a maxim, that *any thing* is better than assignats, we must expect that all things will be difficult to procure, and, of course, bear a high price. I fear, all the empiricism of the legislature cannot produce a nostrum for this want of faith. Dragoons and penal laws only “linger and linger it out;” the disease is incurable.

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My friends, Monf. and Mad. de B——, by way of consolation for their imprifonment, now find themfelves on the lift of emigrants, though they have never been a fingle day abfent from their own province, or from places of refidence where they are well known. But that they may not murmur at this injuflice, the municipality have accompanied their names with thofe of others who have not even been abfent from the town, and one gentleman in particular, who I believe may have been feen on the rampart every day for thefe feven years.—This may appear to you only very abfurd, and you may imagine the confequences eafily obviated; yet thefe miftakes are the effect of private malice, and fubject the perfons affected by them to an infinity of expence and trouble. They are obliged, in order to avert the confifcation of their property, to appear, in every part of the republic where they have poffeffions, with atteftations of their conftant refidence in France, and perhaps fuffer a thoufand mortifications from the official ignorance and brutality of the perfons to whom they apply. No remedy lies againft the authors of thefe vexations, and the fufferer who is prudent fears even to complain.

I have, in a former letter, noticed the great number of beggars that swarm at Arras: they are not less numerous at Amiens, though of a different description—they are neither so disgusting, nor so wretched, but are much more importunate and insolent—they plead neither sickness nor infirmity, and are, for the most part, able and healthy. How so many people should beg by profession in a large manufacturing town, it is difficult to conceive; but, whatever may be the *cause*, I am tempted to believe the *effect* has some influence on the manners of the inhabitants of Amiens. I have seen no town in France so remarkable for a rude and unfeeling behaviour, and it is not fanciful to conjecture that the multitude of poor may tend in part to occasion it. The constant view of a sort of misery that excites little compassion, of an intrusive necessity which one is more desirous to repulse than to relieve, cannot but render the heart callous, and the manners harsh. The avarice of commerce, which is here unaccompanied by its liberality, is glad to confound real distress with voluntary and idle indigence, till, in time, an absence of feeling becomes part of the character; and the constant habit of petulant refusals, or of acceding more from fatigue than benevolence,

lence, has perhaps a similar effect on the voice, gesture, and *external*.

This place has been so often visited by those who describe better than myself, that I have thought it unnecessary to mention public buildings, or any thing equally obvious to the traveller or the resident. The beauty and elegance of the cathedral has been celebrated for ages, and I only remind you of it to indulge my national vanity in the reflection that one of the most splendid monuments of Gothic architecture in France is the work of our English ancestors. The edifice is in perfect preservation, and the hand of power has not yet ventured to appropriate the plate or ornaments; but this forbearance will most probably give way to temptation and impunity. The Convention will respect ancient prejudices no longer than they suppose the people have courage to defend them, and the latter seem so entirely subdued, that, however they may murmur, I do not think any serious resistance is to be expected from them, even in behalf of the relics of St. Firmin.*—The bust of Henry the Fourth,

* St. Firmin, the patron of Amiens, where he is in many fountains represented with his head in his hand.

which was a present from the Monarch himself, is banished the town-house, where it was formerly placed, though, I hope, some royalist has taken possession of it, and deposited it in safety till better times. This once popular Prince is now associated with Nero and Caligula, and it is "*leze nation*" to speak of him to a thorough republican.—I know not if the French had before the revolution reached the acme of perfection, but they have certainly been retrograding very fast since. Every thing that used to create fondness and veneration is despised, and things are esteemed only in proportion as they are worthless. Perhaps the bust of Robespierre may one day replace that of Henry the Fourth, and, to speak in the style of an eastern epistle, "what can I say more?"

Should you ever travel this way with Gray in your hand, you will look for the Ursuline convent, and regret the paintings he mentions: but you may recollect, for your consolation, that they are merely pretty, and remarkable only for being the work of one of the nuns.—Gray, who seems to have had that enthusiastic respect for religious orders common to young minds, admired them on this account; and numbers of English travellers have, I dare say, prepossessed

prepossessed by such an authority, experienced the same disappointment I myself felt on visiting the Ursuline church. Many of the chapels belonging to these communities were very showy and much decorated with gilding and sculpture: some of them are sold for a mere trifle, but the greatest part are filled with corn and forage, and on the door is inscribed "*Magazin des armées.*" The change is almost incredible to those who remember, that less than four years ago the Catholic religion was strictly practised, and the violation of their sanctuaries deemed sacrilegious. Our great historian * might well say "the influence of superstition is fluctuating and precarious;" though, in the present instance, it has rather been restrained than subdued; and the people, who have not been convinced, but intimidated, secretly lament these innovations, and perhaps reproach themselves conscientiously with their submission.——

Yours.

* Gibbon.

June 20:

MERCIER, in his *Tableau de Paris*, notices, on several occasions, the little public spirit existing among his countrymen—it is also observable, that many of the laws and customs presume on this deficiency, and the name of republicans has by no means altered that cautious disposition which makes the French consider either misfortunes or benefits only as their personal interest is affected by them.—I am just returned from a visit to Abbéville, where we were much alarmed on Sunday by a fire at the *Paraclete* convent. The tocsin rang great part of the day, and the principal street of the town was in danger of being destroyed. In such circumstances, you will suppose, that people of all ranks eagerly crowded to offer their service, and endeavour to stop the progress of so terrible a calamity. Nothing less—the gates of the town were shut to prevent its entire evacuation, many hid themselves in garrets and cellars, and dragoons patrolled the streets, and even entered the houses, to force the inhabitants to assist in procuring water; while the consternation, usually the effect of such accidents, was only owing to the fear of being obliged to aid the sufferers.—This employment

ployment of military coercion for what humanity alone should dictate, is not ascribable to the principles of the present government—it was the same before the revolution, (except that the agents of the ancient system were not so brutal and despotic as the soldiers of the republic,) and compulsion was always deemed necessary where there was no stimulant but the general interest.

In England, at any alarm of the sort, all distinction of ranks is forgotten, and every one is solicitous to contribute as much as he is able to the safety of his fellow-citizens; and, so far from an armed force being requisite to procure assistance, the greatest difficulty is to repress the too-officious zeal of the croud.—I do not pretend to account for this national disparity, but I fear what a French gentleman once said to me of the Parisians is applicable to the general character, "*ils sont tous egoïstes*," and they would not do a benevolent action at the risk of soiling a coat or tearing a ruffle.

Distrust of the assignats, and scarcity of bread, have occasioned a law to oblige the farmers, in every part of the republic, to sell their corn at a certain price, infinitely lower than

what they have exacted for some months past. The consequence of this was, that, on the succeeding market days, no corn came to market, and detachments of dragoons are obliged to scour the country to preserve us from a famine. If it did not convey an idea both of the despotism and want with which the nation is afflicted, one should be amused by the ludicrous figures of the farmers, who enter the town preceded by soldiers, and reposing with doleful visages on their sacks of wheat. Sometimes you see a couple of dragoons leading in triumph an old woman and an ass, who follow with lingering steps their military conductors; and the very ass seems to sympathize with his mistress on the disaster of selling her corn at a reduced price, and for paper, when she had hoped to hoard it till a counter-revolution should bring back gold and silver.

The farmers are now, perhaps, the greatest aristocrats in the country; but as both their patriotism and their aristocracy have been a mere calculation of interest, the severity exercised on their avarice is not much to be regretted. The original fault is, however, in an usurped government, which inspires no confidence, who, to supply an administration lavish beyond all example,

ample, has been obliged to issue such an immense quantity of paper as nearly to destroy its credit. In political, as in moral, vices, the first always necessitates a second, and these must still be sustained by others; until, at length, the very sense of right and wrong becomes impaired, and the latter is not only preferred from habit, but from choice.

Thus the arbitrary emission of paper has been necessarily followed by still more arbitrary decrees to support it. For instance—the people have been obliged to sell their corn at a stated price, which has again been the source of various and general vexations. The farmers, irritated by this measure, concealed their grain, or sold it privately, rather than bring it to market.—Hence, some were supplied with bread, and others absolutely in want of it. This was remedied by the interference of the military, and a general search for corn has taken place in all houses without exception, in order to discover if any was secreted; even our bedchambers were examined on this occasion: but we begin to be so accustomed to the *visite domiciliaire*, that we find ourselves suddenly surrounded by the *Garde Nationale*, without being greatly alarmed.—I know not how your English patriots,

triot, who are so enamoured of French liberty, yet thunder with the whole force of their eloquence against the ingress of an exciseman to a tobacco warehouse, would reconcile this domestic inquisition; for the municipalities here violate your tranquillity in this manner under any pretext they choose, and that too with an armed *cortège* sufficient to undertake the siege of your house in form.

About fifteen departments are in insurrection, ostensibly in behalf of the expelled Deputies; but I believe I am authorized in saying, it is by no means the desire of the people at large to interfere. All who are capable of reflection consider the dispute merely as a *family quarrel*, and are not partial enough to either party to adopt its cause. The troops they have already raised have been collected by the personal interest of the members who contrived to escape, or by an attempt of a few of the royalists to make one half of the faction subservient to the destruction of the other. If you judge of the principles of the nation by the success of the Federalists,* and the superiority of the Convention,

* On the 31st of May and 2d of June, the Convention, who had been for some months struggling with the Jacobins
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vention, you will be extremely deceived; for it is demonstrable, that neither the most zealous partizans of the ancient system, nor those of the abolished constitution, have taken any share in the dispute; and the departments most notoriously aristocratic have all signified their adherence to the proceedings of the Assembly. Those who would gladly take an active part in endeavouring to establish a good government, are averse from risking their lives and properties in the cause of Brissot or Condorcet.—At Amiens, where almost every individual is an aristocrat, the fugitive Deputies could not procure the least encouragement, but the town would have received Dumourier, and proclaimed the King without opposition. But this schism in the legislature is considered as a mere contest of banditti, about the division of spoil, not calculated to excite an interest in those they have plundered and oppressed.

and the municipality of Paris, was surrounded by an armed force: the most moderate of the Deputies (those distinguished by the name of Brissotins,) were either menaced to a compliance with the measures of the opposite faction, or arrested; others took flight, and, by representing the violence and slavery in which the majority of the Convention was holden, excited some of the departments to take arms in their favour.—This contest, during its short existence, was called the war of the Federalists.—The result is well known.

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The royalists who have been so mistaken as to make any effort on this occasion, will, I fear, fall a sacrifice, being for the most part without union or concert; and their junction with the Deputies renders them suspicious, if not odious, to their own party. The extreme difficulty, likewise, of communication between the departments, and the strict watch observed over all travellers, form another obstacle to the success of any attempt at present; and, on the whole, the only hope of deliverance for the French seems to rest upon the allied armies and the insurgents of La Vendée.

When I say this, I do not assert from prejudices, which often deceive, nor from conjecture, that is always fallible; but from unexceptionable information—from an intercourse with various ranks of people, and a minute observance of all. I have scarcely met with a single person who does not relate the progress of the insurgents in La Vendée with an air of satisfaction, or who does not appear to expect with impatience the surrender of Condé: and even their language, perhaps unconsciously, betrays their sentiments; for I remark, they do not, when they speak of any victory gained by the arms of the republic, say, *Nous*, or *Notre*,
or

or *Notre armée*, but, *Les Français*, and, *Les troupes de la republique*;—and that always in a tone as though they were speaking of an enemy.

—Adieu.

June 30.

OUR modern travellers are mostly either sentimental or philosophical, or courtly or political; and I do not remember to have read any who describe the manner of living among the gentry and middling ranks of life in France. I will, therefore, relieve your attention for a moment from our actual distresses, and give you the picture of a day as usually passed by those who have easy fortunes and no particular employment.—The social assemblage of a whole family in the morning, as in England, is not very common, for the French do not generally breakfast: when they do, it is without form, and on fruit, bread, wine, and water, or sometimes coffee; but tea is scarcely ever used, except by the sick. The morning is therefore passed with little intercourse, and in extreme dishabille. The men loiter, fiddle, work tapestry, and sometimes read, in a *robe de chambre*, or a jacket and “*pantalons*;*” while the ladies,

* Trowsers.

equipped

equipped only in a short manteau and petticoat, visit their birds, knit, or more frequently idle away the forenoon without doing any thing. It is not customary to walk or make visits before dinner, and if by chance any one calls, he is received in the bedchamber. At half past one or two they dine, but without altering the negligence of their apparel, and the business of the toilette does not begin till immediately after the repast. About four, visits of ceremony begin, and may be made till six or seven, according to the season; but those who intend passing an evening at any particular house, go before six, and the card parties generally finish between eight and nine. People then adjourn to their supper engagements, which are more common than those for dinner, and are, for the most part, in different places, and considered as a separate thing from the earlier amusements of the evening. They keep better hours than the English, most families being in bed by half past ten. The theatres are also regulated by these sober habits, and the dramatic representations are usually over by nine.

A day passed in this manner is, as you may imagine, susceptible of much *ennui*, and the French are accordingly more subject to it than

to any other complaint, and hold it in greater dread than either sickness or misfortune. They have no conception how one can remain two hours alone without being *ennuyé à la mort*; and but few, comparatively speaking, read for amusement: you may enter ten houses without seeing a book; and it is not to be wondered at that people, who make a point of staying at home all the morning, yet do not read, are embarrassed with the disposition of so much time.—It is this that occasions such a general fondness for domestic animals, and so many barbarous musicians, and male-workers of tapestry and tambour.—I cannot but attribute this listlessness and dislike of morning exercise to the quantity of animal food the French eat at night, and going to rest immediately after it, in consequence of which their activity is checked by indigestions, and they feel heavy and uncomfortable for half the succeeding day. The French pique themselves on being a gayer nation than the English; but they certainly must exclude their mornings from the account, for the forlorn and neglected figure of a Frenchman till dinner is a very antidote to cheerfulness, especially if contrasted with the animation of our countrymen, whose forenoon is passed in riding or walking, and who make themselves
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at least decent before they appear even in their own families.

The great difficulty the French have in finding amusement makes them averse from long residences in the country, and it is very uncommon for those who can afford only one house not to prefer a town; but those whose fortune will admit of it live about three months of the year in the country, and the rest in the neighbouring town. This, indeed, as they manage it, is no very considerable expence, for the same furniture often serves for both habitations, and the one they quit being left empty, requires no person to take charge of it, especially as house-breaking is very uncommon in France; at least it was so before the revolution, when the police was more strict, and the laws against robbers were more severe.

You will say I often describe the habits and manners of a nation so frequently visited, as though I were writing from Kamschatka or Japan; yet it is certain, as I have remarked above, that those who are merely itinerant have not opportunities of observing the modes of familiar life so well as one who is stationary, and travellers are in general too much occupied by

by more important observations to enter into the minute and trifling details which are the subject of my communications to you.—But if your attention be sometimes fatigued by occurrences or relations too well known, or of too little consequence to be interesting, I claim some merit in never having once described the proportions of a building, nor given you the history of a town; and I might have contrived as well to tax your patience by an erudite description, as a superficial reflection, or a *female* remark. The truth is, my pen is generally guided by circumstances as they arise, and my ideas have seldom any deeper origin than the scene before me. I have no books here, and I am apt to think if professed travellers were deprived of this resource, many learned etymologies and much profound compilation would be lost to the modern reader.

The insurgents of La Vendée continue to have frequent and decided successes, but the insurrections in the other departments languish. The avowed object of liberating the Convention is not calculated to draw adherents, and if any better purpose be intended, while a faction are the promoters of it, it will be regarded with too much suspicion to procure any effect-

tual movement. Yet, however partial and unconnected this revolt may be, it is an object of great jealousy and inquietude: all the addresses or petitions brought in favour of it are received with disapprobation, and suppressed in the official *bulletin* of the legislature; but those which express contrary sentiments are ordered to be inserted with the usual terms of "*applaudi, adopté, et mention honorable.*"—In this manner the army and the people, who derive their intelligence from these accounts, (which are pasted up in the streets,) are kept in ignorance of the real state of distant provinces, and, what is still more important for the Convention, it retards the communication of examples which they know so many are disposed to imitate.

The people here are nearly in the same state they have been in for some time: murmuring in secret, and submitting in public; expecting every thing from that energy in others which they have not themselves, and accumulating the discontents they are obliged to suppress. The Convention call them the brave republicans of Amiens; but if their bravery were as unequivocal as their aristocracy, they would soon be at the gates of Paris. Even the first levies are
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not all departed for the frontiers, and some who were prevailed on to go are already returned.—All the necessaries of life are augmenting in price—the people complain, pillage the shops and the markets one day, and want the next. Many of the departments have opposed the recruiting much more decidedly than they have ventured to do here; and it was not without inspiring terror by numerous arrests, that the levies which were immediately necessary were procured.—France offers no prospect but that of scarcity, disorder, and oppression; and my friends begin to perceive that we have committed an imprudence in remaining so long. No passports can now be obtained, and we must, as well as several very respectable families still here, abide the event of the war.

It is some weeks since I have had letters from England, and those we receive from the interior come open, or sealed with the seal of the district. This is not peculiar to our letters, as being foreigners, but the same unceremonious inspection is practised with the correspondence of the French themselves. Thus, in this land of liberty, all epistolary intercourse has ceased, except for mere matters of business; and though in the declaration of the rights of man it be

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asserted,

asserted, that every one is entitled to write or print his thoughts, yet it is certain no person can entrust a letter to the post, but at the risk of having it opened; nor could Mr. Thomas Paine himself venture to express the slightest disapprobation of the measures of government, without hazarding his freedom, and, in the end, perhaps, his life. Even these papers, which I reserve only for your amusement, which contain only the opinions of an individual, and which never have been communicated, I am obliged to conceal with the utmost circumspection; for, should they happen to fall into the hands of our domiciliary inquisitors, I should not, like your English libellists, escape with the gentle correction of imprisonment, or the pillory.—A man, who had murdered his wife, was lately condemned to twenty years imprisonment only; but people are guillotined every day for a simple discourse, or an inadvertent expression.—Yours.

Amiens, July 5.

IT will be some consolation to the French, if from the wreck of their civil liberty, they be able to preserve the mode of administering justice as established by the constitution of 1789. Were I not warranted by the best information, I should not venture an opinion on the subject without much diffidence, but chance has afforded me opportunities that do not often occur to a stranger, and the new code appears to me, in many parts, singularly excellent, both as to principle and practice.—Justice is here gratuitous—those who administer it are elected by the people—they depend only on their salaries, and have no fees whatever. Reasonable allowances are made to witnesses both for time and expenses at the public charge—a loss is not doubled by the costs of a prosecution to recover it. In cases of robbery, where property found is detained for the sake of proof, it does not become the prey of official rapacity, but an absolute restitution takes place.—The legislature has, in many respects, copied the laws of England, but it has simplified the forms, and rectified those abuses which make our proceedings almost as formidable to the prosecutor as to the culprit. Having to compose an entire new system, and

being unshackled by professional reverence for precedents, they were at liberty to benefit by example, to reject those errors which have been long sanctioned by their antiquity, and are still permitted to exist, through our dread of innovation. The French, however, made an attempt to improve on the trial by jury, which I think only evinces that the institution as adopted in England is not to be excelled. The decision is here given by ballot—unanimity is not required—and three white balls are sufficient to acquit the prisoner. This deviation from our mode seems to give the rich an advantage over the poor. I fear, that, in the number of twelve men taken from any country, it may sometimes happen that three may be found corruptible: now the wealthy delinquent can avail himself of this human failing; but, “through tatter’d robes small vices do appear,” and the indigent sinner has less chance of escaping than another.

It is to be supposed, that, at this time, the vigour of the criminal laws is much relaxed, and their execution difficult. The army offers refuge and impunity to guilt of all kinds, and the magistrates themselves would be apprehensive of pursuing an offender who was protected by

by the mob, or, which is the same thing, the Jacobins.

The groundwork of much of the French civil jurisprudence is arbitration, particularly in those trifling processes which originate in a spirit of litigation; and it is not easy for a man here, however well disposed, to spend twenty pounds in a contest about as many pence, or ruin himself to secure the possession of half an acre of land. In general, redress is easily obtained without unnecessary procrastination, and with little or no cost. Perhaps most legal codes may be simple and efficacious at their first institution, and the circumstance of their being encumbered with forms which render them complex and expensive, may be the natural consequence of length of time and change of manners. Littleton might require no commentary in the reign of Henry II. and the mysterious fictions that constitute the science of modern judicature were perhaps familiar, and even necessary, to our ancestors. It is to be regretted that we cannot adapt our laws to the age in which we live, and assimilate them to our customs; but the tendency of our nature to extremes perpetuates evils, and makes both the wise and the timid enemies to reform. We fear, like John

Calvin, to tear the habit while we are stripping off the superfluous decoration; and the example of this country will probably long act as a discouragement to all change, either judicial or political. The very name of France will repress the desire of innovation—we shall cling to abuses as though they were our support, and every attempt to remedy them will become an object of suspicion and terror.—Such are the advantages which mankind will derive from the French revolution.

The Jacobin constitution is now finished, and, as far as I am able to judge, it is what might be expected from such an origin: calculated to flatter the people with an imaginary sovereignty—to place the whole power of election in the class most easily misled—to exclude from the representation those who have a natural interest in the welfare of the country, and to establish the reign of anarchy and intrigue.—Yet, however averse the greater number of the French may be from such a constitution, no town or district has dared to reject it; and I remark, that amongst those who have been foremost in offering their acceptance, are many of the places most notoriously aristocratic. I have enquired of some of the inhabitants of these
very

very zealous towns on what principle they acted so much in opposition to their known sentiments: the reply is always, that they fear the vengeance of the Jacobins, and that they are awed by military force. This reasoning is, of course, unanswerable; and we learn, from the debates of the Convention, that the people have received the new constitution "*avec la plus vive reconnaissance*," and that they have all sworn to die in its defence.—Yours, &c.

July 14.

THE return of this day cannot but suggest very melancholy reflections to all who are witnesses of the changes a single year has produced. In twelve months only the government of France has been overturned, her commerce destroyed, the country depopulated to raise armies, and the people deprived of bread to support them.—A despotism more absolute than that of Turkey is established, the manners of the nation are corrupted, and its moral character disgraced in the eyes of all Europe. A barbarous rage has laid waste the fairest monuments of art—whatever could embellish society or contribute to soften existence has disappeared under the reign

reign of these modern Goths—even the necessities of life are becoming rare and inadequate to the consumption—the rich are plundered and persecuted, yet the poor are in want—the national credit is in the last stage of debasement, yet an immense debt is created, and daily accumulating; and apprehension, distrust, and misery, are almost universal.—All this is the work of a set of adventurers who are now divided among themselves—who are accusing each other of those crimes which the world imputes to them all—and who, conscious they can no longer deceive the nation, now govern with the fear and suspicion of tyrants. Every thing is sacrificed to the army and Paris, and the people are robbed of their subsistence to supply an iniquitous metropolis, and a military force that awes and oppresses them.

The new constitution has been received here officially, but no one seems to take the least interest in it: it is regarded in just the same light as a new tax, or any other ministerial mandate, not sent to be discussed but obeyed. The mode of proclaiming it conveyed a very just idea of its origin and tendency. It was placed on a cushion, supported by Jacobins in their red caps, and surrounded by dragoons.

It

It seemed the image of Anarchy, guarded by Despotism.—In this manner they paraded the town, and the *sacred volume* was then deposed on an altar erected on the *Grande Place*.—The *Garde Nationale*, who were ordered to be under arms, attended, and the constitution was read. A few of the soldiers cried “*Vive la republique!*” and every one returned home with countenances in which delight was by no means the prevailing expression.

A trifling incident which I noticed on this occasion will serve, among others of the same kind that I could enumerate, to prove that even the very lower class of the people begin to ridicule and despise their legislators. While a municipal officer was very gravely reading the constitution, an ass forced his way across the square, and placed himself near where the ceremony was performing: a boy, who was under our window, on observing it, cried out, “Why don’t they give him the *accolade fraternelle*?*” “Yes, (rejoined another,) and admit

* Fraternal embrace.—This is the reception given by the President to any one whom the Convention wish particularly to distinguish. On an occasion of the sort, the fraternal embrace was given to an old Negress.—The *honours of the sitting* are also

admit him *aux bonheurs de la séance.*†” This disposition to jest with their misfortunes is, however, not so common as it was formerly. A *bon mot* may alleviate the loss of a battle, and a lampoon on the court solace under the burthen of a new impost; but the most thoughtless or improvident can find nothing very facetious in the prospect of absolute want—and those who have been used to laugh under a circumscription of their political liberty, feel very seriously the evil of a government which endows its members with unlimited power, and enables a Deputy, often the meanest and most profligate character of his department, to imprison all whom caprice, interest, or vengeance, may doom to imprisonment.

I know this will appear so monstrous to an Englishman, that, had I an opportunity of communicating such a circumstance before it were publicly authenticated, you would sup-

also daily accorded to deputations of fish-women, chimney-sweepers, children, and all whose missions are flattering: There is no homage so mean as not to gratify the pride of those to whom dominion is new; and these expressions are so often and so strangely applied, that it is not surprizing they are become the cant phrases of the mob.

† To the honours of the sitting.

pose it impossible, and imagine I had been mistaken, or had written only from report; it is nevertheless true, that every part of France is infested by these Commissioners, who dispose, without appeal, of the freedom and property of the whole department to which they are sent. It frequently happens, that men are delegated to places where they have resided, and thus have an opportunity of gratifying their personal malice on all who are so unfortunate as to be obnoxious to them. Imagine, for a moment, a village-attorney acting with uncontrouled authority over the country where he formerly exercised his profession, and you will have some idea of what passes here, except that I hope no class of men in England are so bad as those which compose the major part of the National Convention.—Yours, &c.

July 23.

THE events of Paris which are any way remarkable are so generally circulated, that I do not often mention them, unless to mark their effect on the provinces; but you will be so much misled by the public papers with regard to the death of Marat, that I think it necessary to notice

notice the subject while it is yet recent in my memory. Were the clubs, the Convention, or the sections of Paris to be regarded as expressing the sense of the people, the assassination of this turbulent journalist must be considered as a national misfortune; yet so far is this from being the case, that the departments are for the most part, if not rejoiced, indifferent—and many of those who impute to him the honour of martyrdom, or assist at his apotheosis, are much better satisfied both with his christian and heathen glories, than they were while he was living to propagate anarchy and pillage. The reverence of the Convention itself is a mere political pantomime. Within the last twelve months nearly all the individuals who compose it have treated Marat with contempt, and I perfectly remember even Danton, one of the members of the Committee of *Salut Publique*, accusing him of being a *contre revolutionnaire*.

But the people, to use a popular expression here, *require to be electrified*.—St. Fargeau is almost forgotten, and Marat is to serve the same purposes when dead, to which he contributed while living.—An extreme grossness and want of feeling form the characteristic feature of the Parisians; they are ignorant, credulous, and *material*,
and

and the Convention do not fail on all occasions to avail themselves of these qualities. The corps of Marat decently enclosed in a coffin would have made little impression, and it was not pity, but revenge, which was to be excited. The disgusting object of a dead leper was therefore exposed to the eyes of a metropolis calling itself the most refined and enlightened of all Europe—

“ And what t' oblivion better were consign'd

“ Is hung on high to poison half mankind.”

I know not whether these lines are most applicable to the display of Marat's body, or the consecration of his fame, but both will be a lasting stigma on the manners and morals of Paris.

If the departments, however, take no interest in the loss of Marat, the young woman who assassinated him has created a very lively one. The slightest anecdotes concerning her are collected with avidity, and repeated with admiration; and this is a still farther proof of what you have heard me advance, that neither patriotism nor humanity has an abundant growth in this country. The French applaud an act in itself horrid and unjustifiable; while
they

they have scarcely any conception of the motive, and such a sacrifice seems to them something supernatural.—The Jacobins assert, that Charlotte Corday was an emissary of the allied powers, or rather of Mr. Pitt; and the Parisians have the complaisance to believe, that a young woman could devote herself to certain destruction at the instigation of another person, as though the same principles which would lead a person to undertake a diplomatic commission, would induce them to meet death.

I wrote some days ago to a lady of my acquaintance at Caen, to beg she would procure me some information relative to this extraordinary female, and I subjoin an extract of her answer, which I have just received :

“ Miss Corday was a native of this department, and had, from her earliest years, been very carefully educated by an aunt who lives at Caen. Before she was twenty she had decided on taking the veil, and her noviciate was just expired when the Constituent Assembly interdicted all religious vows for the future : she then left the convent, and resided entirely with her aunt. The beauty of her person, and particularly her mental acquisitions, which were
superior

superior to that of French women in general, made her an object of much admiration. She spoke uncommonly well, and her discourse often turned on the ancients, and on such subjects as indicated that masculine turn of mind which has since proved so fatal to her. Perhaps her conversation was a little tinged with that pedantry not unjustly attributed to our sex when they have a little more knowledge than usual, but, at the same time, not in such a degree as to render her conversation unpleasant. She seldom gave any opinion on the revolution, but frequently attended the municipalities to solicit the pensions of the expelled *religious*, or on any other occasion where she could be useful to her friends. On the arrival of Petion, Barbaroux, and others of the Brissotine faction, she began to frequent the clubs, and to take a more lively interest in political affairs. Petion, and Barbaroux especially, seemed to be much respected by her. It was even said, she had a tender partiality for the latter, but this I believe is untrue.—I dined with her at her aunt's on the Sunday previous to her departure for Paris. Nothing very remarkable appeared in her behaviour, except that she was much affected by a muster of the recruits who were to march against Paris, and seemed to think

many lives might be lost on the occasion, without obtaining any relief for the country.—On the Tuesday following she left Caen, under pretext of visiting her father, who lives at Sées. Her aunt accompanied her to the gate of the town, and the separation was extremely sorrowful on both sides. The subsequent events are too well known to need recital.”

On her trial, and at her execution, Miss Corday was firm and modest; and I have been told, that in her last moments her whole figure was interesting beyond description. She was tall, well formed, and beautiful—her eyes, especially, were fine and expressive—even her dress was not neglected, and a simple white dishabillé added to the charms of this self-devoted victim. On the whole, it is not possible to ascertain precisely the motives which determined her to assassinate Marat. Her letter to Barbaroux expresses nothing but republican sentiments; yet it is difficult to conceive that a young woman, who had voluntarily embraced the life of a cloister, could be really of this way of thinking.—I cannot but suppose her connection with the Deputies arose merely from an idea that they might be the instruments of restoring the abolished government, and her profession

profession of republican principles after she was arrested might probably be with a view of saving Duperret, and others of the party, who were still in the power of the Convention.—Her selection of Marat still remains to be accounted for. He was, indeed, the most violent of the Jacobins, but not the most dangerous, and the death of several others might have been more serviceable to the cause. Marat was, however, the avowed persecutor of priests and religion, and if we attribute any influence to Miss Corday's former habits, we may suppose them to have had some share in the choice of her victim. Her refusal of the ministry of a constitutional priest at the scaffold strengthens me in this opinion. We pay a kind of involuntary tribute of admiration to such firmness of mind in a young and beautiful woman; and I do not recollect that history has transmitted any thing parallel to the heroism of Charlotte Corday. Love, revenge, and ambition, have often sacrificed their victims, and sustained the courage of their votaries under punishment; but a female, animated by no personal motives, sensible only to the misfortunes of her country, patriotic both from feeling and reflection, and sacrificing herself from *principle*, is singular in the annals of human nature.—Yet, after doing justice to such

an instance of fortitude and philanthropic devotion, I cannot but sincerely lament the act to which it has given rise. At a time when so many spirits are irritated by despair and oppression, the example may be highly pernicious, and a cause, however good, must always be injured by the use of such means in its support.—Nothing can sanctify an assassination; and were not the French more vindictive than humane, the crimes of the republican party would find a momentary refuge in this injudicious effort to punish them.

My friend La Marquise de — has left Paris, and is now at Peronne, where she has engaged me to pass a few weeks with her; so that my next will most probably be dated from thence.—Mr. D—— is endeavouring to get a passport for England. He begins to regret having remained here. His temper, naturally impatient of restraint, accords but ill with the portion of liberty enjoyed by our republicans. Corporal privations and mental interdictions multiply so fast, that irritable people like himself, and valetudinarians like Mrs. D—— and me, could not choose a worse residence; and, as we are now unanimous on the subject, I hope soon to leave the country.—There is,

as you observe in your last, something of indolence as well as friendship in my having so long remained here; but if actions were always analyzed so strictly, and we were not allowed to derive a little credit from our weaknesses, how many great characters would be reduced to the common level. Voltaire introduced a sort of rage for anecdotes, and for tracing all events to trifling causes, which has done much more towards exploding the old-fashioned system of the dignity of human nature than the dry maxims of Rochefoucault, the sophisms of Mandeville, or even the malicious wit of Swift. This is also another effect of the progress of philosophy; and this sort of moral Quixotism, continually in search of evil, and more gratified in discovering it than pained by its existence, may be very philosophical; but it is at least gloomy and discouraging; and we may be permitted to doubt whether mankind become wiser or better by learning, that those who have been most remarkable either for wisdom or virtue were occasionally under the influence of the same follies and passions as other people.—Your uncharitable discernment, you see, has led me into a digression, and I have, without intending it, connected the motives of my stay with reflections on Voltaire's General History,

Barillon's Letters, and all the secret biography of our modern libraries. This, you will say, is only a chapter of a "man's importance to himself;" but public affairs are now so confused and disgusting, that we are glad to encourage any train of ideas not associated with them.

The Commissioners I gave you some account of in a former letter are departed, and we have lately had Chabot, an Ex-capuchin, and a patriot of special note in the Convention, and one Dumont, an attorney of a neighbouring village. They are, like all the rest of these missionaries, entrusted with unlimited powers, and inspire apprehension and dismay wherever they approach.—The *Garde Nationale* of Amiens are not yet entirely subdued to the times, and Chabot gave some hints of a project to disarm them, and actually attempted to arrest some of their officers; but, apprized of his design, they remained two nights under arms, and the Capuchin, who is not martially inclined, was so alarmed at this indication of resistance, that he has left the town with more haste than ceremony.—He had, in an harangue at the cathedral, inculcated some very edifying doctrines on the division of property and the right of pillage;

pillage; and it is not improbable, had he not withdrawn, but the *Amienois* would have ventured, on this pretext, to arrest him. Some of them contrived, in spite of the centinel placed at the lodging of these great men, to paste up on the door two figures, with the names of Chabot and Dumont, in the “fatal position of the unfortunate brave;” and though certain events in the lives of these Deputies may have rendered this perspective of their last moments not absolutely a novelty, yet I do not recollect that Akenfide, or any other author, has enumerated a gibbet amongst the objects, which, though not agreeable in themselves, may be reconciled to the mind by familiarity. I wish, therefore, our representatives may not, in return for this admonitory portrait of their latter end, draw some vengeance on the town, not easily to be appeased. I am no astrologer, but in our sublunary world the conjunction of an attorney and a renegade monk cannot present a fortunate aspect; and I am truly anxious to find myself once again under the more benign influence of your English hemisphere.—

Yours.

Peronne, July 29th

EVERY attempt to obtain passports has been fruitless, and, with that sort of discontented resignation which is the effect of necessity, I now look upon myself as fixed here till the peace. I left Mr. and Mrs. D—— yesterday morning, the disappointment operating upon them in full force. The former takes longer walks than usual, breaks out in philippics against tyrannies of all kinds, and swears ten times a day that the French are the most noisy people upon earth—the latter is vexed, and, for that reason, fancies she is ill, and calculates, with great ingenuity, all the hazard and inconvenience we may be liable to by remaining here. I hope, on my return, to find them more reconciled.

At Villars de Bretonne, on my road hither, some people told me, with great gaiety, that the English had made a descent on the coast of Picardy. Such a report (for I did not suppose it possible) during the last war would have made me tremble, but I heard this without alarm, having, in no instance, seen the people take that kind of interest in public events which formerly made a residence in France unpleasant to an individual of an hostile nation. It is not
that

that they are become more liberal, or better informed—no change of this kind has been discovered even by the warmest advocates of the revolution; but they are more indifferent, and those who are not decidedly the enemies of the present government, for the most part concern themselves as little about the events of the war as though it were carried on in the South Sea.

I fear I should risk an imputation on my veracity, were I to describe to what a degree the French are ignorant and unreflecting as to public men and measures. They draw no conclusions from the past, form no conjectures for the future, and, after exclaiming "*Il ne peut pas durer comme cela*," they, with a resignation which is certainly neither pious nor philosophic leave the rest to the agency of Providence.—Even those who are more informed so bewilder themselves in the politics of Greece and Rome, that they do not perceive how little these are applicable to their own country. Indeed, it should seem, that no modern age or people is worthy the knowledge of a Frenchman.—I have often remarked, in the course of our correspondence, how little they are acquainted with what regards England or the English; and
scarcely

scarcely a day passes that I have not occasion to make the same observation.

My conductor hither, who is a friend of Mad. de T——, and esteemed “*bien instruit*,” was much surprized when I told him that the population and size of London exceeded that of Paris—that we had good fruit, and better vegetables than were to be found in many parts of France. I saw that he suspected my veracity, and there is always on these occasions such a decided and impenetrable incredulity in a Frenchman as precludes all hopes of convincing him. He listens with a sort of self-sufficient complacence which tells you he does not consider your assertions as any thing more than the exaggerations of national vanity, but that his politeness does not allow him to contradict you. I know nothing more disgustingly impertinent than this ignorance, which intrenches itself behind the forms of civility, and, affecting to decline controversy, assumes the merit of forbearance and moderation: yet this must have been often observed by every one who has lived much in French society: for the first emotion of a Frenchman, on hearing any thing which tends to place another country on an equality with France, is doubt—this doubt is instantly reinforced

reinforced by vanity—and, in a few seconds, he is perfectly satisfied that the thing is impossible.

One must be captious indeed to object to this, did it arise from that patriotic feeling so common in the English; but here it is all vanity, downright vanity: a Frenchman must have his country and his mistress admired, though he does not often care much for either one or the other. I have been in various parts of France in the most critical periods of the revolution—I have conversed with people of all parties and of all ranks—and I assert, that I have never yet met but with one man who had a grain of real patriotism. If the Athenian law were adopted which doomed all to death who should be indifferent to the public welfare in a time of danger, I fear there would be a woeful depopulation here, even among the loudest champions of democracy.

It is not thirty miles from Amiens to Peronne, yet a journey of thirty miles is not now to be undertaken inconsiderately; the horses are so much worked, and so ill fed, that few perform such a distance without rest and management. If you wish to take others, and
continue

continue your route, you cannot, or if you wait while your own horses are refreshed, as a reward for your humanity you get starved yourself. Bread being very scarce, no family can get more than sufficient for its own consumption, and those who travel without first supplying themselves do it at the risk of finding none on the road.

Peronne is chiefly remarkable in history for never having been taken, and for a tower where Louis XI. was confined for a short time, after being outwitted in a manner somewhat surprising for a Monarch who piqued himself on his talents for intrigue, by Charles le Temeraire, Duke of Burgundy. Its modern reputation arises from having elected the Abbé Maury as representative, and for entertaining political principles every way analogous to such a choice.

I found the Marquise much altered in her person, and her health much impaired, by the frequent alarms and continued apprehensions she had been subject to at Paris. Fortunately she has no imputation against her but her rank and fortune, for she is utterly guiltless of all political opinions; so that I hope she will be
suffered

suffered to knit stockings, tend her birds and dogs, and read romances in peace.—Yours, &c. &c.

August 1.

WHEN the creation of assignats was first proposed, much ingenuity was employed in conjecturing, and much eloquence displayed in expatiating upon, the various evils that might result from them; yet the genius of party, however usually successful in gloomy perspective, did not at that time imagine half the inconvenience this measure was fraught with. It was easy, indeed, to foresee, that an immense circulation of paper, like any other currency, must augment the price of every thing; but the excessive discredit of the assignats, operating accessarily to their quantity, has produced a train of collateral effects of greater magnitude than even those that were originally apprehended. Within the last twelve months the whole country are become monopolizers—the desire of realizing has so possessed all degrees of people, that there is scarcely an article of consumption which is not bought up and secreted. One would really suppose that nothing was perishable

able but the national credit—the noble, the merchant, the shopkeeper, all who have assignats, engage in these speculations, and the necessities of our dissipated heirs do not drive them to resources for obtaining money more whimsical than the commerce now practised here to get rid of it. I know a beau who has converted his *hypothèque* * on the national domains into train oil, and a General who has given these “airy nothings” the substance and form of hemp and leather! ‡ Goods purchased from such motives are not as you may conceive sold till the temptation of an exorbitant profit seduces the proprietor to risk a momentary possession of assignats, which are again disposed of in a similar way. Thus many necessities of life are withdrawn from circulation, and when

* Mortgage.

‡ In the late rage for monopolies in France, a person who had observed the vast daily consumption of onions, garlic, and eschalots, conceived the project of making the whole district of Amiens tributary for this indispensable article. In consequence, he attended several market-days, and purchased all that came in his way. The country people finding a ready sale for their onions, poured in from all quarters, and our projector found that, in proportion as he bought, the market became more profusely supplied, and that the commodity he had hoped to monopolize was inexhaustible.

a real

a real scarcity ensues, they are produced to the people, charged with all the accumulated gains of these intermediate barterers.

This illiberal and pernicious commerce, which avarice and fear have for some time kept in great activity, has at length attracted the notice of the Convention, and very severe laws are now enacted against monopolies of all kinds. The holder of any quantity of merchandize beyond what he may be supposed to consume is obliged to declare it to his municipality, and to expose the articles he deals in in writing over his door. These clauses, as well as every other part of the decree, seem very wise and equitable; but I doubt if the severity of the punishment annexed to any transgression of it will not operate so as to defeat the purposes intended. A false declaration is punishable by six years imprisonment, and an absolute non-compliance with death.—Blackstone remarks, that it is the certainty, not the severity, of punishment, which makes laws efficacious; and this must ever be the case amongst an humane people.—An inordinate desire of gain is not often considered by mankind as very criminal, and those who would willingly subject it to its adequate punishment of fine and confiscation will

will hesitate to become the means of inflicting death on the offender, or of depriving him of his liberty. The Poets have, from time immemorial, claimed a kind of exclusive jurisdiction over the sin of avarice: but, unfortunately, minds once steeled by this vice are not often sensible to the attacks of ridicule; and I have never heard that any poet, from Plautus to Moliere, has reformed a single miser. I am not, therefore, sorry that our legislature has encroached on this branch of the poetical prerogative, and only wish that the mild regimen of the Muses had been succeeded by something less rigid than the prison or the guillotine. It is true, that, in the present instance, it is not the ordinary and habitual practice of avarice that has called forth the severity of the laws, but a species so destructive and extensive in its consequences, that much may be said in defence of any penalty short of death; and such is the general distrust of the paper, that I really believe, had not some measure of the kind been adopted, no article susceptible of monopoly would have been left for consumption. There are, however, those who retort on the government, and assert, that the origin of the evil is in the waste and speculation of its agents, which also make the immense emission of paper more necessary;

necessary; and they are right in the fact, though not in their deduction, for as the evil does exist, whatever may be the cause, it is certainly wise to endeavour to remedy it.

The position of Valenciennes, which is supposed to be on the eve of a surrender—the progress of the insurgents in La Vendée—the discontents in the South—and the charge of treachery against so many of the Generals, and particularly Custine—all together seem to have agitated the public extremely: yet it is rather the agitation of uncertainty than that occasioned by any deep impression of hope or fear. The people wish to be relieved from their present situation, yet are without any determinate views for the future; and, indeed, in this part of the country, where they have neither leaders nor union, it would be very difficult for them to take a more active part.

The party of the federalists languish, and that because it is nothing more than a party, and a party of which the heads excite neither interest nor esteem. I conclude you learn from the papers all the more important events, and I confine myself, as usual, to such details as I think less likely to reach you. The humanity of the English must

often banish their political animosities when they read what passes here; and thousands of my countrymen must at this moment lament with me the situation to which France is reduced by projects in which common sense can distinguish no medium between wickedness and folly.

All *apparent* attachment to royalism is now cautiously avoided, but the royalists do not diminish by persecution, and the industry with which they propagate their opinions is nearly a match for all the *force armée* of the republicans.—It is not easy to print pamphlets or newspapers, but there are certain shops which one would think were discovered by instinct, where are sold a variety of mysterious emblems of royalty, such as fans that have no visible ornaments except landscapes, &c. but when opened by the initiated, present tolerable likenesses of the Royal Family; snuff-boxes with secret lids, containing miniature busts of the late King; and music so ingeniously printed, that what to the common eye offers only some popular air, when folded so as to join the heads and tails of the notes together, forms sentences of very treasonable import, and by no means flattering to the existing

isting government.—I have known these interdicted trifles purchased at extravagant prices by the best-reputed patriots, and by officers who in public breathe nothing but unconquerable democracy, and detestation of Kings. Yet, though these things are circulated with extreme caution, every body has something of the sort, and, as Charles Surface says, “for my part, I don’t see who is *out* of the secret.”

The belief in religious miracles is exploded, and it is only in political ones that the faith of the people is allowed to exercise itself.—We have lately seen exhibited at the fairs and markets a calf, produced into the world with the tri-coloured cockade on its head; and on the painted cloth that announces the phenomenon is the portrait of this natural revolutionist, with a mayor and municipality in their official scarfs, addressing the four-footed patriot with great ceremony.

We set out early to-morrow morning for Soissons, which is about twenty leagues from hence. Travelling is not very desirable in the present circumstances, but Mad. de F—— has some affairs to settle there which cannot well

be entrusted to a third person. The times, however, have a very hostile appearance, and we intend, if possible, to be absent but three days.—Yours.

Soissons, August 4.

“AND you may go by Beauvais if you will, for which reason many go by Beauvais;” and the stranger who turns out of his road to go by Soissons, must use the same reasoning, for the consciousness of having exercised his free agency will be all his reward for visiting Soissons. This, by the way; for my journey hither not being one of curiosity, I have no right to complain; yet somehow or other, by associating the idea of the famous Vase, the ancient residence of the first French Kings, and other circumstances as little connected as these I suppose with modern history, I had ranked Soissons in my imagination as one of the places I should see with interest. I find it, however, only a dull, decent-looking town, tolerably large, but not very populous. In the new division of France it is the capital of the department De
l’Aisne

l'Aisne, and is of course the seat of the administration.

We left Peronne early, and being so fortunate as to encounter no accidental delays, we arrived within a league of Soissons early in the afternoon.—Mad. de F——, recollecting an acquaintance who has a chateau not far out of our road, determined to stop an hour or two, for, as she said, her friend was so “fond of the country,” she should be sure to find him there. We did indeed find this Monsieur, who is so “fond of the country,” at home, extremely well powdered, dressed in a striped silk coat, and engaged with a card party, on a warm afternoon on the third of August.—The chateau was situated as a French chateau usually is, so as to be benefited by all the noises and odours of the village—built with a large single front, and a number of windows so judiciously placed, that it must be impossible either to be cool in summer or warm in winter.

We walked out after taking some coffee, and I learned that this lover of the country did not keep a single acre of land in his own hands, but that the part immediately contiguous to

the house was cultivated for a certain share of the profit by a farmer who lives in a miserable looking place adjoining, and where I saw the operations of the dairy-maid carried on amidst pigs, ducks, and turkeys, who seemed to have established a very familiar access.

Previous to our arrival at Soissons, the Marquise (who, though she does not consider me as an aristocrat, knows I am by no means a *republican*,) begged me to be cautious in expressing my sentiments, as the Comte de —, where we were going, had embraced the principles of the revolution very warmly, and had been much blamed by his family on this account. Mad. de F—— added, that she had not seen him for above a year, but that she believed him still to be “*extrêmement patriote*.” We reached Monf. de —’s just as the family were set down to a very moderate supper, and I observed that their plate had been replaced by pewter. After the first salutations were over, it was soon visible that the political notions of the Count were much changed. He is a sensible, reflecting man, and seems really to wish the good of his country. He thinks, with many others, that all the good effects which
might

might have been obtained by the révolution will be lost through the contempt and hatred which the republican government has drawn upon it.

Monf. de — has two fons who have distinguished themselves very honourably in the army, and he has himself made great pecuniary sacrifices; but this has not secured him from numerous domiciliary visits and vexations of all kinds. The whole family are at intervals a little penfive, and Monf. de — told us, at a moment when the ladies were absent, that the taking of Valenciennes had occasioned a violent fermentation at Paris, and that he had serious apprehensions for those who have the misfortune to be distinguished by their rank, or obnoxious from their supposed principles—that he himself, and all who were presumed to have an attachment to the constitution of eighty-nine, were much more feared, and of course more suspected, than the original aristocrats—and “*enfin*” that he had made up his mind *à la Française* to the worst that could happen.

I have just run over the papers of the day, and I perceive that the debates of the Convention are filled with invectives against the English. A letter has been very opportunely

found on the ramparts of Lisle, which is intended to persuade the people that the British government has distributed money and phos-phoric matches in every town in France—the one to provoke insurrection, the other to set fire to the corn.* You will conclude this letter to be a fabrication, and it is imagined and executed with so little ingenuity, that I doubt whether it will impose on the most ignorant of the people for a moment.

The Queen has been transferred to the Conciergerie, or common prison, and a decree is passed for trying her; but perhaps at this moment (whatever may be the result hereafter) they only hope her situation may operate as a check upon the enemy; at least I have heard it doubted by many whether they intend to proceed seriously on this trial so long threatened.—Perhaps I may have before noticed

* “The National Convention, in the name of violated humanity, denounces to all the world, and to the people of England in particular, the base, perfidious, and wicked conduct of the British government, which does not hesitate to employ fire, poison, assassination, and every other crime, to procure the triumph of tyranny, and the destruction of the rights of man.”

Decree, 1st August, 1793.

to you that the Convention never seemed capable of any thing great or uniform, and that all their proceedings took a tinge from that frivolity and meanness which I am almost tempted to believe inherent in the French character. They have just now, amidst a long string of decrees, the objects of which are of the first consequence, inserted one for the destruction of all the royal tombs before the tenth of August, and another for reducing the expences of the King's children, particularly their food, to bare necessaries. Had our English revolutionists thus employed themselves, they might have expelled the sculptured Monarchs from the Abbey, and waged a very successful war on the admirers of Gothic antiquity; but neither the Stuarts, nor the Catholic religion, would have had much to fear from them.

We have been wandering about the town all day, and I have not remarked that the successes of the enemy appear to occasion any regret. When I was in France three years ago, you may recollect that my letters usually contained some relation of our embarrassment and delays, owing to the fear and ignorance of the people. At one place they apprehended the introduction

tion of foreign troops—at another, that the Comte d'Artois was to burn all the corn. In short, the whole country teem'd with plots and counterplots, every one of which was more absurd and inexplicable than those of Oates, with his whole tribe of Jesuits. At present, when a powerful army is invading the frontiers, and that people have not in many places bread to eat, they seem to be very little solicitous about the former, and as little disposed to blame the aristocrats for the latter.

It is really extraordinary, after all the pains that have been taken to excite hatred and resentment against the English, that I have not heard of a single instance where they have been insulted or molested. Whatever inconveniences they may have been subjected to, were acts of the government, not of the people; and perhaps this is the first war between the two nations in which it has not been *vice versa*.

I accompanied Mad. de — this afternoon to the house of a rich merchant, where she had business, and who, she told me, had been a furious patriot, but his ardour is now considerably abated. He was just returned from the department,

department,* where his affairs had led him; and he assures us, that in general the agents of the republic were more inaccessible, more insolent, corrupt and ignorant, than any employed under the old government. He demurred to paying Mad. de — a sum of money all in *assignats à face* †; and this famous patriot would readily have given me an hundred livres for a pound sterling.

We shall return to Peronne to-morrow, and I have availed myself of the hour between cards and supper, which is usually employed by the French in undressing, to scribble my remarks. In some families, I suppose, supping in dishabille is an arrangement of œconomy, in others of ease; but I always think it has the air of preparation for a very solid meal; and, in effect, supping is not a mere ceremony with either sex in this country.

I learnt in conversation with M. de —, whose sons were at Famars when the camp was

* Here used for the place where the public business is transacted.

† *Assignats à face*---that is, with the King's effigy; at this time greatly preferred to those issued since his death.

forced,

forced, that the carnage was terrible, and that the loss of the French on this occasion amounted to several thousands. You will be informed of this much more accurately in England, but you will scarcely imagine that no official account was ever published here, and that in general the people are ignorant of the circumstance, and all the disasters attending it. In England, you have opposition papers that amply supply the omissions of the ministerial gazettes, and often dwell with much complacency on the losses and defeats of their country; here none will venture to publish the least event they suppose the government wish to keep concealed. I am told, a leading feature of republican governments is to be extremely jealous of the liberty of the press, and that of France is, in this respect, truly republican.—Adieu.

Peronne, August.

I Have often regretted, my dear brother, that my letters have for some time been rather intended to satisfy your curiosity than your affection. At this moment I feel differently, and I rejoice that the inquietude and danger of my situation will, probably, not come to your knowledge

ledge till I shall be no longer subject to them. I have been for several days unwell, and yet my body, valetudinarian as I am at best, is now the better part of me ; for my mind has been so deranged by suspense and terror, that I expect to recover my health long before I shall be able to tranquillize my spirits.

On our return from Soissons I found, by the public prints, that a decree had passed for arresting all natives of the countries with which France is at war, and who had not constantly resided there since eighty-nine. This intelligence, as you will conceive, sufficiently alarmed me, and I lost no time in consulting Mad. de ——'s friends on the subject, who were generally of opinion that the decree was merely a menace, and that it was too unjust to be put in execution. As some days elapsed and no steps were taken in consequence, I began to think they were right, and my spirits were somewhat revived ; when one evening, as I was preparing to go to bed, my maid suddenly entered the room, and, before she could give me any previous explanation, the apartment was filled with armed men. As soon as I was collected enough to enquire the object of this unseasonable visit, I learned that all this military apparel was to put the seals on
my

my papers, and convey my person to the Hotel de Ville!—I knew it would be vain to remonstrate, and therefore made an effort to recover my spirits and submit. The business, however, was not yet terminated, my papers were to be sealed—and though they were not very voluminous, the process was more difficult than you would imagine, none of the company having been employed on affairs of the kind before. A debate ensued on the manner in which it should be done, and, after a very tumultuous discussion, it was sagaciously concluded to seal up the doors and windows of all the apartments appropriated to my use. They then discovered that they had no seal fit for the purpose, and a new consultation was holden on the propriety of affixing a cypher which was offered them by one of the *Garde Nationale*.

This weighty matter being at length decided, the doors of my bedchamber, dressing-room, and of the apartments with which they communicated, were carefully fastened up, though not without an observation on my part that I was only a guest at Mad. de ——'s, and that an order to seize my papers or person was not a mandate for rendering a part of her house useless. But there was no reasoning with ignorance and a score of bayonets,

bayonets, nor could I obtain permission even to take some linen out of my drawers. On going down stairs, I found the court and avenues to the garden amply guarded, and with this numerous escort, and accompanied by Mad. de —, I was conducted to the Hotel de Ville. I know not what resistance they might expect from a single female, but, to judge by their precautions, they must have deemed the adventure a very perilous one. When we arrived at the Hotel de Ville, it was near eleven o'clock: the hall was crowded, and a young man, in a dirty linen jacket and trowsers and dirty linen, with the air of a *Polisson* and the countenance of an assassin, was haranguing with great vehemence against the English, who, he asserted, were all agents of Pitt, (especially the women,) and were to set fire to the corn and corrupt the garrisons of the fortified towns.—The people listened to these terrible projects with a stupid sort of surprise, and, for the most part, seemed either very careless or very incredulous. As soon as this inflammatory piece of eloquence was finished, I was presented to the ill-looking orator, who, I learned, was a *representant du peuple*. It was very easy to perceive that my spirits were quite overpowered, and that I could with difficulty support myself; but this did not prevent

prevent the *representant du peuple* from treating me with that inconsiderate brutality commonly the effect of a sudden accession of power on narrow and vulgar minds. After a variety of impertinent questions, menaces of a prison for myself, and exclamations of hatred and vengeance against my country, on producing some friends of Mad. de —, who were to be answerable for me, I was released, and returned home more dead than alive.

You must not infer, from what I have related, that I was particularly distinguished on this occasion, for though I have no acquaintance with the English here, I understand they had all been treated much in the same manner.— As soon as the *representant* had left the town, by dint of sollicitation we prevailed on the municipality to take the seal off the rooms, and content themselves with selecting and securing my papers, which was done yesterday by a commission, formally appointed for the purpose. I know not the quality of the good citizens to whom this important charge was entrusted, but I concluded from their costume that they had been more usefully employed the preceeding part of the day at the anvil and last. It is certain, however, they had undertaken a business greatly

greatly beyond their powers. They indeed turned over all my trunks and drawers, and dived to the bottom of water-jugs and flower-jars with great zeal, but neglected to search a large portfolio that lay on the table, probably from not knowing the use of it; and my servant conveyed away some letters, while I amused them with the sight of a blue-bottle fly through a microscope. They were at first much puzzled to know whether books and music were included under the article of papers, and were very desirous of burning a history of France, because they discovered, by the title-page, that it was "about Kings;" but the most difficult part of this momentous transaction was taking an account of it in writing. However, as only one of the company could write, there was no disputing as to the scribe, though there was much about the manner of execution. I did not see the composition, but I could hear that it stated "*comme quoi*." They had found the seals unbroken, "*comme quoi*,"—they had taken them off, and divers "*as hows*" of the same kind. The whole concluded, and my papers deposited in a box, I was at length freed from my guests, and put in possession of my apartments.

It is impossible to account for this treatment of the English by any mode of reasoning that does not exclude both justice and policy; and viewing it only as a symptom of that desperate wickedness which commits evil, not as a means, but an end, I am extremely alarmed for our situation. At this moment the whole of French politics seems to center in an endeavour to render the English odious both as a nation and as individuals. The Convention, the clubs, and the streets of Paris, resound with low abuse of this tendency; and a motion was made in the former, by one Garnier, to procure the assassination of Mr. Pitt. Couthon, a member of the *Comité de Salut Public*, has proposed and carried a decree to declare him the enemy of mankind; and the citizens of Paris are stunned by the hawkers of Mr. Pitt's plots with the Queen to *starve all France*, and *massacre all the patriots*.—Amidst so many efforts * to provoke the destruction

* When our representative appeared at Abbéville with an intention of arresting the English, and other foreigners, the people, to whom these missionaries with unlimited powers were yet new, took the alarm, and became very apprehensive that he was come likewise to disarm their *Garde Nationale*. The streets were crowded, the town-house was beset, and Citizen Dumont found it necessary to quiet the town's people

destruction of the English, it is wonderful, when we consider the sanguinary character which the

people by the following proclamation. One part of his purpose, that of ensuring his personal safety, was answered by it; but that of exciting the people against the English, failed---inasmuch, that I was told even the lowest classes, so far from giving credit to the malignant calumnies propagated against the English, openly regretted their *arrestation*.

“ CITIZENS,

“ On my arrival amongst you, I little thought that malevolence would be so far successful as to alarm you on the motives of my visit. Could the aristocrats, then, flatter themselves with the hope of making you believe I had the intention of disarming you? Be deaf, I beseech you, to so absurd a calumny, and seize on those who propagate it. I came here to *fraternize* with you, and to assist you in getting rid of those malcontents and foreigners, who are striving to destroy the republic by the most infernal manœuvres.—An horrible plot has been conceived. Our harvests are to be fired by means of phosphoric matches, and all the patriots assassinated. Women, priests, and foreigners, are the instruments employed by the coalesced despots, and by England above all, to accomplish these criminal designs.—A law of the first of this month orders the arrestation of all foreigners born in the countries with which the republic is at war, and not settled in France before the month of July, 1789. In execution of this law I have required domiciliary visits to be made. I have urged the preservation of the public tranquillity. I have therefore done my duty, and only what all good citizens must approve.”

French people have lately evinced, that we are yet safe, and it is in effect only to be accounted for by their disinclination to take any part in the animosities of their government.

I have just received a few lines from Mrs. D——, written in French, and put in the post without sealing. I perceive, by the contents, though she enters into no details, that circumstances similar to those I have described have likewise taken place at Amiens. In addition to my other anxieties, I have the prospect of a long separation from my friends; for though I am not in confinement, I cannot, while the decree which arrested me remains in force, quit the town of P——. I have not often looked forward with so little hope, or so little certainty, and though a first-rate philosopher might make up his mind to a particular event, yet to be prepared for any thing, and all things, is a more difficult matter.

The great resources of French eloquence have long been the histories of Greece and Rome, and it is not till within a few days that an orator has discovered all this good learning to be of no use—not, as you might imagine, because the moral character and political situation

ation of the French differ from those of the Greeks and Romans, but because they are superior to all the people who ever existed, and ought to be cited as models, instead of descending to become copyists. "Therefore, continues this Jacobin sage, (whose name is Henriot, and who is highly popular,) let us burn all the libraries and all the *antiquities*, and have no guide but ourselves—let us cut off the heads of all the Deputies who have not voted according to our principles, banish or imprison all the gentry and the clergy, and guillotine the Queen and General Custine!"

These are the usual subjects of discussion at the clubs, and the Convention itself is not much more decent. I tremble when I recollect that I am in a country where a member of the legislature proposes rewards for assassination, and the leader of a society, that pretends to inform and instruct the people, argues in favour of burning all the books. The French are on the eve of exhibiting the singular spectacle of a nation enlightened by science, accustomed to the benefit of laws and the enjoyment of arts, suddenly becoming barbarous by system, and sinking into ignorance from choice.—When the Goths shared the most curious antiques by

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weight,

weight, were they not more civilized than the Parisian of ninety-three, who disturbs the ashes of Henry the Fourth, or destroys the monument of Turenne, by a decree?—I have myself been forced to an act very much in the spirit of the times, but I could not, without risking my own safety, do otherwise; and I sat up late last night for the purpose of burning Burke, which I had brought with me, but had fortunately so well concealed, that it escaped the late inquisition. I indeed made this sacrifice to prudence with great unwillingness—every day, by confirming Mr. Burke's assertions, or fulfilling his predictions, had so increased my reverence for the work, that I regarded it as a kind of political oracle. I did not, however, destroy it without an apologetic apostrophe to the author's benevolence, which I am sure would suffer, were he to be the occasion, though involuntarily, of conducting a female to a prison or the Guillotine.

“How chances mock, and changes fill the cup of alteration up with divers liquors.”—On the same hearth, and in a mingled flame, was consumed the very constitution of eighty-nine, on which Mr. Burke's book was a censure, and which would now expose me to equal danger were it

it to be found in one's possession. In collecting the ashes of these two compositions, the tendency of which is so different, (for such is the complexion of the moment, that I would not have even the servant suspect I had been burning a quantity of papers,) I could not but moralize on the mutability of popular opinion. Mr. Burke's Gallic adversaries are now most of them proscribed and anathematized more than himself. Perhaps another year may see his bust erected on the pedestal which now supports that of Brutus or Le Pelletier.

The letters I have written to you since the communication was interrupted, with some other papers that I am solicitous to preserve, I have hitherto always carried about me, and I know not if any danger, merely probable, will induce me to part with them. You will not, I think, suspect me of attaching any consequence to my scribblings from vanity; and if I run some personal risk in keeping them, it is because the situation of this country is so singular, and the events which occur almost daily so important, that the remarks of any one who is unlucky enough to be a spectator, may interest, without the advantage of literary talents.

—Yours.

Peronne, August 24.

I Have been out to-day for the first time since the arrest of the English, and though I have few acquaintance here, my adventure at the Hotel de Ville has gained me a sort of popularity. I was saluted by many people I did not know, and overwhelmed with expressions of regret for what had happened, or congratulations on my having escaped so well.

The French are not commonly very sensible to the sufferings of others, and it is some mortification to my vanity that I cannot, but at the expence of a reproaching conscience, ascribe the civilities I have experienced on this occasion to my personal merit. It would doubtless have been highly flattering to me to relate the tender and general interest I had excited even among this cold-hearted people, who scarcely feel for themselves; but the truth is, they are disposed to take the part of any one whom they think persecuted by their government, and their representative, Dumont, is so much despised in his private character, and detested in his public one, that it suffices to have been ill treated by him, to ensure one a considerable portion of the public good will.

This

This disposition is not a little consolatory, at a time when the whole rage of an oligarchical tyranny, though impotent against the English as a nation, meanly exhausts itself on the few helpless individuals within its power. Embarrassments accumulate—and if Mr. Pitt's agents did not most obligingly write letters, and these letters happen to be intercepted just when they are most necessary, the *Comité de Salut Public* would be at a loss how to account for them.

Assignats have fallen into a discredit beyond example, an hundred and thirty livres having been given for one Louis-d'or; and, as if this were not the natural result of circumstances like the present, a correspondence between two Englishmen informs us, that it is the work of Mr. Pitt, who, with an unparelled ingenuity, has contrived to send couriers to every town in France, to concert measures with the bankers for this purpose. But if we may believe Barrere, one of the members of the Committee, this atrocious policy of Mr. Pitt will not be unrevenged, for another intercepted letter contains assurances that an hundred thousand men have taken up arms in England, and are preparing to march against the iniquitous metropolis that gives this obnoxious minister shelter.

My

My situation is still the same—I have no hope of returning to Amiens, and have just reason to be apprehensive for my tranquillity here. I had a long conversation this morning with two people whom Dumont has left here to keep the town in order during his absence. The subject was to prevail on them to give me a permission to leave Peronne, but I could not succeed. They were not, I believe, indisposed to gratify me, but were afraid of involving themselves. One of them expressed much partiality for the English, but was very vehement in his disapprobation of their form of government, which he said was “*detestable*.” My cowardice did not permit me to argue much in its behalf, (for I look upon these people as more dangerous than the spies of the old police,) and I only ventured to observe, with great diffidence, that though the English government was monarchical, yet the power of the Crown was very much limited; and that as the chief subjects of our complaints at present were not our institutions, but certain practical errors, they might be remedied without any violent or radical changes; and that our nobility were neither numerous nor privileged, and by no means obnoxious to the majority of the people.—“*Ab, vous avez donc de la noblesse en Angleterre, ce sont peut-être les milords,*” exclaimed

exclaimed our republican, and it operated on my whole system of defence like my uncle Toby's smoke-jack, for there was certainly no discussing the English constitution with a political critic, who I found was ignorant even of the existence of a third branch of it; yet this reformer of governments and abhorrer of Kings has powers delegated to him more extensive than those of an English Sovereign, though I doubt if he can write his own language; and his moral reputation is still less in his favour than his ignorance—for, previous to the revolution, he was known only as a kind of swindler, and has more than once been nearly convicted of forgery.—This is, however, the description of people now chiefly employed, for no honest man would accept of such commissions, nor perform the services annexed to them.

Bread continues very scarce, and the populace of Paris are, as usual, very turbulent; so that the neighbouring departments are deprived of their subsistence to satisfy the wants of a metropolis that has no claim to an exemption from the general distress, but that which arises from the fears of the Convention. As far as I have opportunity of learning or observing, this
part

part of France is in that state of tranquillity which is not the effect of content but supineness; the people do not love their government, but they submit to it, and their utmost exertions amount only to a little occasional obstinacy, which a few dragoons always reduce to compliance. We are sometimes alarmed by reports that parties of the enemy are approaching the town, when the gates are shut, and the great bell is toll'd; but I do not perceive that the people are violently apprehensive about the matter. Their fears are I believe, for the most part, rather personal than political—they do not dread submission to the Austrians, but military licentiousness.

I have been reading this afternoon Lord Orrery's definition of the male Cecisbeo, and it reminds me that I have not yet noticed to you a very important class of females in France, who may not improperly be denominated female Cecisbeos. Under the old system, when the rank of a woman of fashion had enabled her to preserve a degree of reputation and influence in spite of the gallantries of her youth and the decline of her charms, she adopted the equivocal character I here allude to, and, relinquishing the adorations claimed
by

by beauty, and the respect due to age, charitably devoted herself to the instruction and advancement of some young man of personal qualifications and uncertain fortune. She presented him to the world, panegyricised him into fashion, and insured his consequence with one set of females, by hinting his successes with another. By her exertions he was promoted in the army or distinguished at the levee, and a career begun under such auspices often terminated in a brilliant establishment.—In the less elevated circle, a female Cecisbeo is usually of a certain age, of an active disposition, and great volubility, and her functions are more numerous and less dignified. Here the grand objects are not to besiege ministers, nor give a *ton* to the *protégé* at a fashionable *ruelle*, but to obtain for him the solid advantages of what she calls “*un bon parti*.*” To this end she frequents the houses of widows and heiresses, vaunts the docility of his temper, and the greatness of his expectations, enlarges on the solitude of widowhood, or the dependence and insignificance of a spinster; and these prefatory encomiums usually end in the concerted introduction of the Platonic “*ami*.”

* A good match.

But

But besides these principal and important cares, a female Cecilio of the middling rank has various subordinate ones—such as buying linen, choosing the colour of a coat, or the pattern of a waistcoat, with all the minutiae of the favourite's dress, in which she is always consulted at least, if she has not the whole direction.—It is not only in the first or intermediate classes that these useful females abound, they are equally common in more humble situations, and only differ in their employments, not in their principles. A woman in France, whatever be her condition, cannot be persuaded to resign her influence with her youth; and the *Bourgeoise* who has no pretensions to court favour or the disposal of wealthy heiresses, attaches her *élève* by knitting him stockings, forcing him with *bons morceaux* till he has an indigestion, and frequent regales of coffee and *liqueur*.

You must not conclude from all this that there is any gallantry implied, or any scandal excited—the return for all these services is only a little flattery, a philosophic endurance of the card-table, and some skill in the disorders of lap-dogs. I know there are in England, as well as in France, many notable females of a certain age, who delight in what they call
managing,

managing, and who are zealous in promoting, matches among the young people of their acquaintance; but for one that you meet with in England there are fifty here.

I doubt much if, upon the whole, the morals of the English women are not superior to those of the French; but however the question may be decided as to *morals*, I believe their superiority in decency of *manners* is indisputable—and this superiority is, perhaps, more conspicuous in women of a *certain age*, than in the younger part of the sex. We have a sort of national regard for propriety, which deters a female from lingering on the confines of gallantry, when age has warned her to withdraw; and an old woman that should take a passionate and exclusive interest about a young man not related to her, would become at least an object of *ridicule*, if not of *censure*:—yet in France nothing is more common; every old woman appropriates some youthful dangler, and, what is extraordinary, his attentions are not distinguishable from those he would pay to a younger object.—I should remark, however, as some apology for these juvenile gallants, that there are very few of what we call *Tabbies* in France; that is, females of severe principles and contracted

tracted features, in whose apparel every pin has its destination with mathematical exactness, who are the very watch-towers of a neighbourhood, and who give the alarm on the first appearance of incipient frailty. Here, antique dowagers and faded spinsters are all gay, laughing, *rouged*, and indulgent—so that 'bating the subtraction of teeth and addition of wrinkles, the disparity between *one* score and *four* is not so great :

“ Gay rainbow silks their mellow charms enfold,

“ Nought of these beauties but themselves is old.”

I know if I venture to add a word in defence of *Tabbyhood*, I shall be engaged in a war with yourself and all our young acquaintance; yet in this age, which so liberally “softens, and blends, and weakens, and dilutes” away all distinctions, I own I am not without some partiality for strong lines of demarcation; and, perhaps, when fifty retrogrades into fifteen, it makes a worse confusion in society than the toe of the peasant treading on the heel of the courtier.—But, adieu: I am not gay, though I trifle. I have learnt something by my residence in France, and can be, as you see, frivolous under circumstances that ought to make me grave.—Yours.

THE

Peronne, August 29.

THE political horizon of France threatens nothing but tempests. If we are still tranquil here, it is only because the storm is retarded, and, far from deeming ourselves secure from its violence, we suffer in apprehension almost as much as at other places is suffered in reality. An hundred and fifty people have been arrested at Amiens in one night, and numbers of the gentry in the neighbouring towns have shared the same fate. This measure, which I understand is general throughout the republic, has occasioned great alarms, and is beheld by the mass of the people themselves with regret. In some towns, the Bourgeois have presented petitions to the Representatives on mission in behalf of their gentry thus imprisoned: but, far from succeeding, all who have signed such petitions are menaced and intimidated, and the terror is so much increased, that I doubt if even this slight effort will be repeated any where.

The *levée en masse*, or rising in a body, which has been for some time decreed, has not yet taken place. There are very few, I believe, that comprehend it, and fewer who are disposed

to comply. Many consultations have been holden, many plans proposed, but as the result of all these consultations and plans is to send a certain number to the frontiers, the suffrages have never been unanimous except in giving their negative.—Like Falstaff's troops, every one has some good cause of exemption; and if you were to attend a meeting where this affair is discussed, you would conclude the French to be more physically miserable than any people on the globe. Youths, in apparent good health, have internal disorders, or concealed infirmities—some are near-sighted—others epileptic—one is nervous, and cannot present a musquet—another is rheumatic, and cannot carry it. In short, according to their account, they are a collection of the lame, the halt, and the blind, and fitter to send to the hospital, than to take the field. But, in spite of all these disorders and incapacities, a considerable levy must be made, and the dragoons will, I dare say, operate very wonderful cures.

The surrender of Dunkirk to the English is regarded as inevitable. I am not politician enough to foresee the consequences of such an event, but the hopes and anxieties of all parties seem directed thither as if the fate of the war depended

depended on it. As for my own wishes on the subject, they are not national, and if I secretly invoke the God of Armies for the success of my countrymen, it is because I think all that tends to destroy the present French government may be beneficial to mankind. Indeed, the successes of war can at no time gratify a thinking mind farther than as they tend to the establishment of peace.

After several days of a mockery which was called a trial, though the witnesses were afraid to appear, or the Counsel to plead in his favour, Custine has suffered at the Guillotine. I can be no judge of his military conduct, and Heaven alone can judge of his intentions. None of the charges were, however, substantiated, and many of them were absurd or frivolous. Most likely, he has been sacrificed to a cabal, and his destruction makes a part of that system of policy, which, by agitating the minds of the people with suspicions of universal treason and unfathomable plots, leaves them no resource but implicit submission to their popular leaders.

The death of Custine seems rather to have stimulated than appeased the barbarity of the Parisian mob. At every defeat of their armies
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they call for executions, and several of those on whom the lot has fallen to march against the enemy have stipulated, at the tribune of the Jacobins, for the heads * they exact as a condition of their departure, or as the reward of their labours. The laurel has no attraction for heroes like these, who invest themselves with the baneful yew and inauspicious cypress, and go to the field of honour with the dagger of the assassin yet ensanguined. “Fair steeds, gay shields, bright arms,†” the fancy-created deity, the wreath of fame, and all that poets have imagined to decorate the horrors of war, are not necessary to tempt the gross barbarity of the Parisian: he seeks not glory, but carnage—his incentive is the groans of defenceless victims—he enlists under the standard of the Guillotine, and acknowledges the executioner for his tutelary Mars.

In remarking the difficulties that have occurred in carrying into execution the *levée en masse*, I neglected to inform you that the

* Many insisted they would not depart until after the death of the Queen---some claimed the death of one General, some that of another, and all the lives or banishment of the gentry and clergy.

† Spenser.

prime mover of all these machinations is your omnipotent Mr. Pitt—it is he who has fomented the perverseness of the towns, and alarmed the timidity of the villages—he has persuaded some that it is not pleasant to leave their shops and families, and insinuated into the minds of others that death or wounds are not very desirable—he has, in fine, so effectually achieved his purpose, that the Convention issues decree after decree, the members harangue to little purpose, and the few recruits already levied, like those in the spring, go from many places strongly escorted to the army.—I wish I had more peaceful and more agreeable subjects for your amusement, but they do not present themselves, and “you must blame the times, not me.” I would wish to tell you that the legislature is honest, that the Jacobins are humane, and the people patriots; but you know I have no talent for fiction, and if I had, my situation is not favourable to any effort of fancy.—
Yours.

Peronne, Sept. 7.

THE successes of the enemy on all sides, the rebellion at Lyons and Marseilles, with the increasing force of the insurgents in La Vendée, have revived our eagerness for news, and if the indifference of the French character exempt them from more patriotic sensations, it does not banish curiosity; yet an eventful crisis, which in England would draw people together, here keeps them apart. When an important piece of intelligence arrives, our provincial politicians shut themselves up with their gazettes, shun society, and endeavour to avoid giving an opinion until they are certain of the strength of a party or the success of an attempt. In the present state of public affairs, you may therefore conceive we have very little communication—we express our sentiments more by looks and gestures than words, and Lavater (admitting his system) would be of more use to a stranger than Boyer or Chambaud. If the English take Dunkirk, perhaps we may be a little more social and more decided.

Mad. de — has a most extensive acquaintance, and as we are situated on one of the roads from Paris to the northern army, notwithstanding

ing the cautious policy of the moment, we are tolerably well informed of what passes in most parts of France ; and I cannot but be astonished, when I combine all I hear, that the government is able to sustain itself. Want, discord, and rebellion, assail it within—defeats and losses from without. Perhaps the solution of this political problem can only be found in the selfishness of the French character, and the want of connection between the different departments. Thus one part of the country is subdued by means of another: the inhabitants of the South take up arms in defence of their freedom and their commerce, while those of the North refuse to countenance or assist them, and wait in selfish tranquillity till the same oppression is extended to themselves. The majority of the people have no point of union nor mode of communication, while the Jacobins, whose numbers are comparatively insignificant, are strong, by means of their general correspondence, their common center at Paris, and the exclusive direction of all the *public prints*, But, whatever are the causes, it is certain that the government is at once powerful and detested—almost without apparent support, yet difficult to overthrow; and the submission of Rome to a dotard and a boy can no longer

excite the wonder of any one who reflects on what passes in France,

After various decrees to effect the *levée en masse*, the Convention have discovered that this sublime and undefined project was not calculated for the present exhausted state of martial ardour. They therefore no longer presume on any movement of enthusiasm, but have made a positive and specific requisition of all the male inhabitants of France between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. This, as might be expected, has been more effectual, because it interests those that are exempt to force the compliance of those who are not. Our young men here were like children with a medicine—they proposed first one form of taking this military potion, then another, and finding them all equally unpalatable, would not, but for a little salutary force, have decided at all,

A new law has been passed for arresting all the English who cannot produce two witnesses of their *civisme*, and those whose conduct is thus guaranteed are to receive *tickets of hospitality*, which they are to wear as a protection. This decree has not yet been carried into effect at Peronne, nor am I much disturbed about it.

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Few of our countrymen will find the matter very difficult to arrange, and I believe they have all a better protection in the disposition of the people towards them, than any that can be assured them by decrees of the Convention.

Sept. 11. The news of Lord Hood's taking possession of Toulon, which the government affected to discredit for some days, is now ascertained; and the Convention, in a paroxysm of rage, at once cowardly and unprincipled, has decreed that all the English not resident in France before 1789, shall be imprisoned as hostages, and be answerable with their lives for the conduct of their countrymen and of the *Toulonese* towards Bayle and Beauvais, two Deputies, said to be detained in the town at the time of its surrender. My first emotions of terror and indignation have subsided, and I have, by packing up my clothes, disposing of my papers, and providing myself with money, prepared for the worst. My friends, indeed, persuade me, (as on a former occasion,) that the decree is too atrocious to be put in execution; but my apprehensions are founded on a principle not likely to deceive me—namely, that those who have possessed themselves of the French government are capable of any thing. I live
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in constant fear, watching all day and listening all night, and never go to *bed* but with the expectation of being awakened, nor *rise* without a presentiment of misfortune.—I have not spirits nor composure to write, and shall discontinue my letters until I am relieved from suspense, if not from uneasiness. I risk much by preserving these papers, and, perhaps, may never be able to add to them; but whatever I may be reserved for, while I have a hope they may reach you they shall not be destroyed.—I bid you adieu in a state of mind which the circumstances I am under will describe better than words.—Yours.

Maison d'Arrêt, Arras, Oct. 15.

DEAR BROTHER,

THE fears of a timid mind usually magnify expected evil, and anticipated suffering often diminishes the effect of an apprehended blow; yet my imagination had suggested less than I have experienced, nor do I find that a preparatory state of anxiety has rendered affliction more supportable. The last month of my life has been a compendium of misery; and my recollection, which on every other subject seems

to fail me, is on this but too faithful, and will enable me to relate events which will interest you not only as they personally concern me, but as they present a picture of the barbarity and despotism to which this whole country is subject, and to which many thousands besides myself were on the same instant victims.

A few evenings after I concluded my last, the firing of cannon and ringing the great bell announced the arrival of Dumont (still Representative *on mission* in our department). The town was immediately in alarm, all the gates were shut, and the avenues leading to the ramparts guarded by dragoons. Our house being in a distant and unfrequented street, before we could learn the cause of all this confusion, a party of the national guard, with a municipal officer at their head, arrived, to escort Mad de ——— and myself to a church, where the *Representant* was then examining the prisoners brought before him. Almost as much astonished as terrified, we endeavoured to procure some information of our conductors, as to what was to be the result of this measure; but they knew nothing, and it was easy to perceive they thought the office they were executing an unpleasant one. The streets we passed were crowded with people,

people, whose silent consternation and dismayed countenances increased our forebodings, and depressed the little courage we had yet preserved. The church at our arrival was nearly empty, and Dumont preparing to depart, when the municipal officer introduced us to him. As soon as he learned that Mad. de — was the sister of an emigrant, and myself a native of England, he told us we were to pass the night in a church appointed for the purpose, and that on the morrow we should be conveyed to Arras. For a moment all my faculties became suspended, and it was only by an effort almost convulsive that I was able to ask how long it was probable we should be deprived of our liberty. He said he did not know—"but that the raising of the siege of Dunkirk, and the loss of six thousand troops which the French had taken prisoners, would doubtless produce an insurrection in England, *par consequent* a peace, and our release from captivity!"

You may be assured I felt no desire of freedom on such terms, and should have heard this ignorant and malicious suggestion only with contempt, had not the implication it conveyed that our detention would not terminate but with the war overwhelmed every other idea. Mad.

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de — then petitioned that we might, on account of our health, (for we were both really unwell,) be permitted to go home for the night, accompanied by guards if it were thought necessary. But the *Representant* was inexorable, and in a brutal and despotic tone ordered us away.—When we reached the church, which was to be our prison till morning, we found about an hundred and fifty people, chiefly old men, women, and children, dispersed in melancholy groupes, lamenting their situation, and imparting their fears to each other. The gloom of the building was increased by the darkness of the night; and the noise of the guard, many of whom were intoxicated, the odour of tobacco, and the heat of the place, rendered our situation almost insupportable. We soon discovered several of our acquaintance, but this association in distress was far from consolatory, and we passed the time in wandering about together, and consulting upon what would be of most use to us in our confinement. We had, indeed, little to hope for from the morrow, yet the hours dragged on heavily, and I know not if ever I beheld the return of light with more pleasure. I was not without apprehension for our personal safety. I recollected the massacres in churches at Paris, and the frequent propositions that had been

been made to exterminate the gentry and clergy. Mad. de — has since confessed, that she had the same ideas.

Morning at length came, and our servants were permitted to enter with breakfast. They appeared sorrowful and terror-stricken, but offered with great willingness to accompany us whithersoever we should be sent. After a melancholy sort of discussion, it was decided that we should take our *femmes de chambres*, and that the others should remain for the safety of the house, and to send us what we might have occasion for. This settled, they returned with such directions as we were able to give them, (God knows, not very coherent ones,) to prepare for our journey; and as our orders, however confused, were not very voluminous, they were soon executed, and before noon every thing was in readiness for our departure. The people employed by our companions were equally diligent, and we might very well have set out by one o'clock, had our case been at all considered; but, I know not why, instead of so providing that we might reach our destination in the course of the day, it seemed to have been purposely contrived that we should be all night on the road, though we had already
passed

passed one night without rest, and were exhausted by watching and fatigue.

In this uncertain and unpleasant state we waited till near six o'clock; a number of small covered waggons were then brought, accompanied by a detachment of dragoons, who were to be our escort. Some time elapsed, as you may suppose, before we could be all settled in the carriages and such a cavalcade put in motion; but the concourse of people that filled the streets, the appearance of the troops, and the tumult occasioned by so many horses and carriages, overpowered my spirits, and I remember little of what passed till I found we were on the road to Arras. Mad. de ——'s maid now informed us that Dumont had arrived the evening before in *extreme ill humour*, summoned the municipality in haste, enquired how many people they had arrested, and what denunciations they had yet to make. The whole body corporate trembled, they had arrested no one, and, still worse, they had no one to accuse; and could only alledge in their behalf that the town was in the utmost tranquillity, and the people were so well disposed, that all violence was unnecessary. The *Representant* be-
came

came furious, vociferated, (*tout grossièrement à la Française,**) that he knew there were five thousand aristocrats in Peronne, and that if he had not at least five hundred brought him before morning, he would declare the town in a state of rebellion. Alarmed by this menace, they began to arrest with all possible speed, and were more solicitous to procure their number than to make discriminations. Their diligence, however, was inadequate to appease the cholerick legislator, and the Mayor, municipal officers, and all the administrators of the district, were in the morning sent to the Castle, whence they are to be conveyed, with some of their own prisoners, to Amiens.— Besides this intelligence, we learned that before our servants had finished packing up our trunks, some Commissioners of the section arrived to put the seals on every thing belonging to us, and it was not without much altercation that they consented to our being frequently furnished with necessaries—that they had not only sealed up all the house, but had placed a guard there, whom *Mad. de* — is to pay, at the rate of two shillings a day.

* In the vulgar French manner.

We were too large a body to travel fast, and by the time we reached Bapaume (though only fifteen miles) it was after twelve; it rained dreadfully, the night was extremely dark, the roads were bad, and the horses tired; so that the officer who conducted us thought it would be difficult to proceed before morning. We were therefore once more crowded into a church, in our wet clothes, (for the covering of the waggon was not thick enough to exclude the rain,) a few bundles of damp straw were distributed, and we were then shut up to repose as well as we could. All my melancholy apprehensions of the preceding night returned with accumulated force, especially as we were now in a place where we were unknown, and were guarded by some of the newly-raised dragoons, of whom we all entertained very unfavourable suspicions. We did not, as you may well imagine, attempt to sleep—a bed of wet straw laid on the pavement of a church filthy, as most French churches are, and the fear of being assassinated, resisted every effort of nature herself, and we were very glad when at the break of day we were summoned to continue our journey. About eleven we entered Arras: the streets were filled by idle people, apprized of our arrival; but no one offered us any insult, except some soldiers, (I believe, by

their uniform, refugees from the Netherlands,) who cried, "*à la Guillotine!—à la Guillotine!*"

—The place to which we were ordered had been the house of an emigrant, now converted into an house of detention, and which, though large, was excessively full. The keeper, on our being delivered to him, declared he had no room for us, and we remained with our baggage in the court-yard some hours before he had, by dislodging and compressing the other inhabitants, contrived to place us. At last, when we were half dead with cold and fatigue, we were shown to our quarters. Those allotted for my friend, myself, and our servants, was the corner of a garret without a cieling, cold enough in itself, but rendered much warmer than was desirable by the effluvia of a score of living bodies, who did not seem to think the unpleasantness of their situation at all increased by dirt and offensive smells. Weary as we were, it was impossible to attempt reposing until a purification had been effected: we therefore set ourselves to sprinkling vinegar and burning perfumes; and it was curious to observe that the people, (all *gens comme il faut*,*) whom we found inhaling the atmosphere of a Caffrarian hut, declared their nerves were incommoded by the essence of roses and *vinaigre des quatre voleurs*. As a part of the room was

* People of fashion.

occupied

occupied by men, our next business was to separate our corner by a curtain, which we had fortunately brought with our bedding; and this done, we spread our mattresses and lay down, while the servants were employed in getting us tea. As soon as we were a little refreshed, and the room was quiet for the night, we made up our beds as well as we could, and endeavoured to sleep. Mad. de — and the two maids soon forgot their cares; but, though worn out by fatigue, the agitation of my mind conquered the disposition of my body. I seemed to have lost the very faculty of sleeping, and passed this night with almost as little repose as the two preceding ones. Before morning I discovered that remaining so long in damp clothes, and the other circumstances of our journey, had given me cold, and that I had all the symptoms of a violent fever.—I leave you to conjecture, for it would be impossible to detail, all the misery of illness in such a situation; and I will only add, that by the care of Mad. de —, whose health was happily less affected, and the attention of my maid, I was able to leave the room in about three weeks.—I must now secrete this for some days, but will hereafter resume my little narrative, and explain how I have ventured to write so much even in the very neighbourhood of the Guillotine.—Adieu.

Maison d'Arret, Arras, Oct. 17.

ON the night I concluded my last, a report that Commissioners were to visit the house on the morrow obliged me to dispose of my papers beyond the possibility of their being found. The alarm is now over, and I proceed.—After something more than three weeks indisposition, I began to walk in the yard, and make acquaintance with our fellow-prisoners. Mad. de — had already discovered several that were known to her, and I now found, with much regret, that many of my Arras friends were here also. Having been arrested some days before us, they were rather more conveniently lodged, and taking the wretchedness of our garret into consideration, it was agreed that Mad. de — should move to a room less crowded than our own, and a dark closet that would just contain my mattresses was resigned to me. It is indeed a very sorry apartment, but as it promises me a refuge where I may sometimes read or write in peace, I have taken possession of it very thankfully. A lock on the door is not the least of its recommendations, and by way of securing myself against all surprize, I have contrived an additional fastening by means of a large nail and the chain of a portmanteau—I have likewise, under pretext of keeping out the wind,
papered

papered over the cracks of the door, and provided myself with a sand-bag, so that no one can perceive when I have a light later than usual.—With these precautions, I can amuse myself by putting on paper any little occurrences that I think worth preserving, without much danger, and perhaps the details of a situation so new and so strange may not be uninteresting to you.

We are now about three hundred in number of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions—*ci-devant noblesse*, parents, wives, sisters, and other relations of emigrants—priests who have not taken the oaths, merchants and shopkeepers accused of monopoly, nuns, farmers that are said to have concealed their corn, miserable women with scarcely clothes to cover them for not going to the constitutional mass, and many only because they happened to be at an inn, or on a visit from their own town, when a general arrest took place of all who are what is called *etrangers*, that is to say, not foreigners only, but not inhabitants of the town where they are found.—There are, besides, various descriptions of people sent here on secret informations, and who do not themselves know the precise reason of their confinement. I

imagine we are subject to nearly the same rules as the common prisons: no one is permitted to enter or speak to a "*detenu*" but at the gate, and in presence of the guard; and all letters, parcels, baskets, &c. are examined previous to their being either conveyed from hence or received. This, however, depends much on the political principles of those who happen to be on guard: an aristocrat or a constitutionalist will read a letter with his eyes half shut, and inspect bedding and trunks in a very summary way; while a thorough-paced republican spells every syllable of the longest epistle, and opens all the roasted pigs or duck pies before he allows their ingress.—None of the servants are suffered to go out, so that those who have not friends in the town to procure them necessaries are obliged to depend entirely on the keeper, and of course pay extravagantly dear for every thing; but we are so much in the power of these people, that it is prudent to submit to such impositions without murmuring.

I did not, during my illness, read the papers, and have to-day been amusing myself with a large packet. General Houchard, I find, is arrested, for not having, as they say he might have done, driven all the English army into the

the sea, after raising the siege of Dunkirk; yet a few weeks ago their utmost hopes scarcely amounted to the relief of the town: but their fears having subsided, they have now leisure to be jealous; and I know no situation so little to be envied under the present government as that of a successful General.—Among all their important avocations, the Convention have found time to pass a decree for obliging women to wear the national cockade, under pain of imprisonment; and the municipality of the superb Paris have ordered that the King's family shall, in future, use pewter spoons and eat brown bread.

Oct. 18. I begin to be very uneasy about Mr. and Mrs. D——. I have written several times, and still receive no answer. I fear they are in a confinement more severe than my own, or that our letters miscarry. A servant of Mad. de ——'s was here this morning, and no letters had come to Peronne, unless, as my friend endeavours to persuade me, the man would not venture to give them in presence of the guard, who *par excellence* happened to be a furious Jacobin.—We had the mortification of hearing that a very elegant carriage of Mad. de ——'s has been put in requisition, and taken

to convey a tinman and two farmers who were going to Paris on a mission—that two of her farmer's best horses had been killed by hard work in taking provisions to the army, and that they are now cutting down the young wood on her estate to make pikes.—The seals are still on our effects, and the guard remains in possession, which has occasioned us the expence of buying a variety of articles we could not well dispense with: for, on examining the baggage after our arrival, we found it very much diminished; and this has happened to almost all the people who have been arrested. Our suspicions naturally fall on the dragoons, and it is not very surprizing that they should attempt to steal from those whom they are certain would not dare to make any complaint.

Many of our fellow-prisoners are embarrassed by their servants having quitted them.—One Collot d'Herbois, a member of the *Comité de Salut Public*, has proposed to the Convention to collect all the gentry, priests, and suspected people, into different buildings, which should be previously mined for the purpose, on the least appearance of insurrection, and blow them up all together.—You may perhaps conclude, that such a project was received with horror, and

and the adviser of it treated as a monster. Our humane legislature, however, very coolly sent it to the committee to be discussed, without any regard to the terror and apprehension which the bare idea of a similar proposal must inspire in those who are the destined victims. I cannot myself believe that this abominable scheme is intended for execution, but it has nevertheless created much alarm in timid minds, and has occasioned in part the defection of the servants I have just mentioned. Those who were sufficiently attached to their masters and mistresses to endure the confinement and privations of a *Maison d'Arret*, tremble at the thoughts of being involved in the common ruin of a gunpowder explosion; and the men seem to have less courage than the women, at least more of the latter have consented to remain here.— It was atrocious to publish such a conception, though nothing perhaps was intended by it, as it may deprive many people of faithful attendants at a time when they are most necessary.

We have a *tribunal revolutionnaire* here, with its usual attendant the Guillotine, and executions are now become very frequent. I know not who are the sufferers, and avoid enquiring through

through fear of hearing the name of some acquaintance. As far as I can learn, the trials are but too summary, and little other evidence is required than the fortune, rank, and connections of the accused. The Deputy who is Commissioner for this department is one Le Bon, formerly a priest—and, I understand, of an immoral and sanguinary character, and that it is he who chiefly directs the verdicts of the juries according to his personal hatred or his personal interest.—We have lately had a very melancholy instance of the terror created by this tribunal, as well as of the notions that prevail of its justice. A gentleman of Calais, who had an employ under the government, was accused of some irregularity in his accounts, and, in consequence, put under arrest. The affair became serious, and he was ordered to prison, as preliminary to his trial. When the officers entered his apartment to take him, regarding the judicial procedure as a mere form, and concluding it was determined to sacrifice him, he in a frenzy of despair seized the dogs in the chimney, threw them at the people, and, while they escaped to call for assistance, destroyed himself by cutting his arteries.—It has appeared since the death of this unfortunate man, that
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the charge against him was groundless, and that he only wanted time to arrange his papers, in order to exonerate himself entirely.

Oct. 19. We are disturbed almost nightly by the arrival of fresh prisoners, and my first question of a morning is always "*N'est il pas du monde entré la nuit ?*" — Angelique's usual reply is a groan, and "*Ah, mon Dieu, oui ;*" "*Une dizaine de prêtres ;*" or, "*Une trentaine de nobles :*" and I observe the depth of the groan is nearly in proportion to the quality of the person she commiserates. Thus, a groan for a Comte, a Marquise, or a Priest, is much more audible than one for a simple gentlewoman or a merchant ; and the arrival of a Bishop (especially if not one of the constitutional clergy) is announced in a more sorrowful key than either.

While I was walking in the yard this morning, I was accosted by a female whom I immediately recollected to be Victoire, a very pretty *couturiere*,* who used to work for me when I was at Panthemont, and who made your last holland shirts. I was not a little surprized to see her in such a situation, and took her aside to enquire her history. I found that her mo-

* Sempstres,

ther was dead, and that her brother having set up a little shop at St. Omer, had engaged her to go and live with him. Being under five-and-twenty, the last requisition obliged him to depart for the army, and leave her to carry on the business alone. Three weeks after, she was arrested at midnight, put into a cart, and brought hither. She had no time to take any precautions, and their little commerce, which was in haberdashery, as well as some work she had in hand, is abandoned to the mercy of the people that arrested her. She has reason to suppose her crime is not having frequented the constitutional mafs.—Her accuser is a member of one of the town committees, who, since her brother's absence, has persecuted her with dishonourable proposals, and, having been repulsed, has taken this method of revenging himself. Her conjecture is most probably right, as, since her imprisonment, this man has been endeavouring to make a sort of barter with her for her release.

I am really concerned for this poor creature, who is at present a very good girl, but if she remain here she will not only be deprived of her means of living, but perhaps her morals may be irremediably corrupted. She is now lodged in a room with ten or dozen men, and the house is
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so crowded that I doubt whether I have interest enough to procure her a more decent apartment.

What can this strange policy tend to, that thus exposes to ruin and want a girl of one-and-twenty—not for any open violation of the law, but merely for her religious opinions; and this, too, in a country which professes toleration as the basis of its government?

My friend, Mad. de ———, *s'ennuie* terribly: she is not incapable of amusing herself, but is here deprived of the means. We have no corner we can call our own to sit in, and no retreat when we wish to be out of a crowd except my closet, where one can only see by candle-light. Besides, she regrets her employments, and projects for the winter. She had begun painting a St. Thérèse, and translating an Italian romance, and had nearly completed the education of a dozen canary birds, who would in a month's time have accompanied the harp so delightfully, as to overpower the sound of the instrument. I believe if we had a few more square inches of room she would be tempted, if not to bring the whole chorus, at least to console herself with two particular favourites, distinguished by curious topknots, and rings
about

about their necks.—With all these feminine propensities, she is very amiable, and her case is indeed singularly cruel and unjust.—Left, at an early age, under the care of her brother, she was placed by him at Panthemont (where I first became acquainted with her) with an intention of having her persuaded to take the veil; but finding her averse from a cloister, she remained as a pensioner only, till a very advantageous marriage with the Marquis de —, who was old enough to be her father, procured her release. About two years ago he died, and left her a very considerable fortune, which the revolution has reduced nearly to one third of its former value.—The Comte de —, her brother, was one of the original patriots, and embraced with great warmth the cause of the people; but having very narrowly escaped the massacres of September, 1792, he immediately after emigrated.—Thus my poor friend, immured by her brother till the age of twenty-two in a convent, then sacrificed three years to a husband of a disagreeable temper and unsuitable age, is now deprived of the first liberty she ever enjoyed, and is made answerable for the conduct of a man over whom she has no sort of influence. It is not, therefore, extraordinary that she cannot reconcile herself to her present

present situation, and I am really often more concerned on her account than my own. Cut off from her usual resources, she has no amusement but wandering about the house; and if her other causes of uneasiness be not augmented, they are at least rendered more intolerable by her inability to fill up her time. This does not arise from a deficiency of understanding, but from never having been accustomed to think. Her mind resembles a body that is weak, not by nature, but from want of exercise; and the number of years she has passed in a convent has given her that mixture of childishness and romance, which, by making frivolities necessary, renders the mind incapable of exertion or self-support.

Oct. 20. The unfortunate Queen, after a trial of some days, during which she seems to have behaved with great dignity and fortitude, is no longer sensible to the regrets of her friends or the malice of her enemies. It is singular that I have not yet heard her death mentioned in the prison—every one looks grave and affects silence. I believe her death has not occasioned an effect so universal as that of the King, and whatever people's opinions may be, they are afraid of expressing them: for it is said, though I know

know not with what truth, that we are surrounded by spies, and several who have the appearance of being prisoners like ourselves have been pointed out to me as the objects of this suspicion.

I do not pretend to undertake the defence of the Queen's *imputed* faults—yet I think there are some at least which one may be very fairly admitted to doubt. Compassion should not make me an advocate for guilt—but I may, without sacrificing morals to pity, venture to observe, that the many scandalous histories circulated to her prejudice took their rise at the birth of the Dauphin,* which was so insurmountable a bar to the views of the Duke of Orleans.

* Nearly at the same time, and on the same occasion, there were literary partisans of the Duke of Orleans, who endeavoured to persuade the people that the iron mask, which had so long excited curiosity and eluded conjecture, was the real son of Louis XIII.—and Louis XIV. in consequence, supposititious, and only the illegitimate offspring of Cardinal Mazarin and Anne of Austria—that the spirit of ambition and intrigue which characterised this minister had suggested this substitution to the lawful heir, and that the fears of the Queen and confusion of the times had obliged her to acquiesce :

“ Cette opinion ridicule, et dont les dates connues de l'histoire demontrent l'absurdité, avoit eu des partisans en France—
elle

Orleans. He might hope, by popularity, to supersede the children of the Count d'Artois, who was hated; but an immediate heir to the Crown could be removed only by throwing suspicions on his legitimacy. These pretensions, it is true, were so absurd, and even incredible, that had they been urged at the time, no inference in the Queen's favour would have been admitted from them; but as the existence of such projects, however absurd and iniquitous, has since been demonstrated, one may now, with great appearance of reason, allow them some weight in her justification.

elle tendoit à avilir la maison regnante, et à persuader au peuple que le trône n'appartient pas aux descendans de Louis XIV. prince furtivement substitué, mais à la postérité du second fils de Louis XIII. qui est la tige de la branche d'Orleans, et qui est reconnue comme descendant légitimement, et sans objection, du Roi Louis XIII."

*Nouvelles Considerations sur le Masque de Fer,
Memoirs de Richelieu.*

The author of the above Memoirs adds, that after the taking of the Bastille, new attempts were made to propagate this opinion, and that he himself had refuted it with many people, by producing original letters and papers, sufficiently demonstrative of its absurdity.

The affair of the necklace was of infinite disservice to the Queen's reputation; yet it is remarkable, that the most furious of the Jacobins are silent on this head as far as it regarded her, and always mention the Cardinal de Rohan in terms that suppose him the culpable party: but, "whatever her faults, her woes deserve compassion;" and perhaps the moralist, who is not too severe, may find some excuse for a Princess, who, at the age of sixteen, possibly without one real friend or disinterested adviser, became the unrestrained idol of the most licentious Court in Europe. Even her enemies do not pretend that her fate was so much a merited punishment as a political measure: they alledge, that while her life was yet spared, the valour of their troops was checked by the possibility of negociation; and that being no more, neither the people nor armies expecting any thing but execration or revenge, they will be more ready to proceed to the most desperate extremities.— This you will think a barbarous sort of policy, and considering it as national, it appears no less absurd than barbarous; but for the Convention, whose views perhaps extend little farther than to saving their heads, peculating, and receiving their eighteen livres a day, such measures, and such

such a principle of action, are neither unwise nor unaccountable: "for the wisdom of civilized nations is not their wisdom, nor the ways of civilized people their ways." *——It was reported that the Queen was offered her life, and the liberty to retire to St. Cloud, her favourite residence, if she would engage the enemy to raise the siege of Maubeuge and withdraw; but that she refused to interfere.

* I have been informed, by a gentleman who saw the Queen pass in her way to execution, that the short white bed-gown and the cap she had on were discoloured by smoke, and that her whole appearance seemed to have been intended, if possible, to degrade her in the eyes of the multitude.—The benevolent mind will recollect with pleasure, that even the Queen's enemies allow her a fortitude and energy of character which must have counteracted this paltry malice, and rendered it incapable of producing any emotion but contempt. On her first being removed to the Conciergerie, she applied for some necessaries; but the humane municipality of Paris refused them, under pretext that the demand was contrary to the system of "*la sainte égalité*,"—holy equality.

Arras.

FOR some days previous to the battle by which Maubeuge was relieved, we had very gloomy apprehensions, and had the French army been unsuccessful and forced to fall back, it is not improbable but the lives of those detained in the *Maison d'Arrêt** might have been sacrificed under pretext of appeasing the people, and to give some credit to the suspicions so industriously inculcated that all their defeats are occasioned by internal enemies. My first care, as soon as I was able to go down stairs, was to examine if the house offered any means of escape in case of danger, and I believe, if we could preserve our recollection, it might be practicable; but I can so little depend on my strength and spirits, should such a necessity occur, that perhaps the consolation of knowing I have a resource is the only benefit I should ever derive from it.

Oct. 21. I have this day made a discovery of a very unpleasant nature, which Mad. de — has hitherto cautiously concealed from me.— All the English, and other foreigners in their

* House of detention.

circumstances,

circumstances, are now, without exception, arrested, and the confiscation of their property is decreed. It is uncertain if the law is to extend to wearing apparel, but I find that on this ground the Committee of Peronne persist in refusing to take the seals off my effects, or to permit my being supplied with any necessaries whatever. In other places, they have put two, four, and, I am told, even to the number of six guards, in houses belonging to the English; and these guards, exclusive of being paid each two shillings per day, burn the wood, regale on the wine, and pillage in detail all they can find, while the unfortunate owner is starving in a *Maison d'Arrêt*, and cannot obtain permission to withdraw a single article for his own use.—The plea for this paltry measure is, that, according to the report of a deserter escaped from Toulon, Lord Hood has hanged one Beauvais, a member of the Convention. I have no doubt but the report is false, and, most likely, fabricated by the *Comité de Salut Public*, in order to palliate an act of injustice previously meditated.

It is needless to expatiate on the atrocity of making individuals, living here under the faith of the nation, responsible for the events of the war, and it is whispered that even the people

are a little ashamed of it; yet the government are not satisfied with making us accountable for what really does happen, but they attribute acts of cruelty to our countrymen, in order to excuse those they commit themselves, and retaliate imagined injuries by substantial vengeance.—Legendre, a member of the Convention, has proposed, with a most benevolent ingenuity, that the manes of the aforesaid Beauvais should be appeased by exhibiting Mr. Luttrell in an iron cage for a convenient time, and then hanging him.—A gentleman from Amiens, lately arrested while happening to be here on business, informs me, that Mr. Luttrell is now in the common gaol of that place, lodged with three other persons, in a miserable apartment, so small, that there is not room to pass between their beds. I understand he was advised to petition Dumont for his removal to a *Maison d'Arrêt*, where he would have more external convenience; but he rejected this counsel, no doubt from a disdain which did him honour, and preferred to suffer all that the mean malice of these wretches would inflict, rather than ask any accommodation as a favour.—The distinguishing Mr. Luttrell from any other English gentleman is as much a proof of ignorance as of baseness; but in this, as in every thing else, the

the present French government is still more wicked than absurd, and our ridicule is suppressed by our detestation.

OCT. 22. Mad. de —'s *homme d'affaires* has been here to day, but no news from Amiens. I know not what to conjecture. My patience is almost exhausted, and my spirits are fatigued. Were I not just now relieved by a distant prospect of some change for the better, my situation would be insupportable. "Oh world! oh world! but that thy strange mutations make us wait thee, life would not yield to age." We should die before our time, even of moral diseases, unaided by physical ones; but the uncertainty of human events, which is the "worm i'the bud" of happiness, is to the miserable a cheering and consolatory reflection. Thus have I dragged on for some weeks, postponing, as it were, my existence, without any resource, save the homely philosophy of "*nous verrons demain.*"*

At length our hopes and expectations are become less general, and if we do not obtain our liberty, we may be able at least to procure

* "We shall see to-morrow."

a more eligible prison. I confess, the source of our hopes, and the protector we have found, are not of a dignity to be ushered to your notice by citations of blank verse, or scraps of sentiment; for though the top of the ladder is not quite so high, the first rounds are as low as that of Ben Bowling's.

Mad. de ——'s confidential servant, who came here to-day, has learned, by accident, that a man, who formerly worked with the Marquis's tailor, having (in consequence, I suppose, of a political vocation,) quitted the selling of old clothes, in which he had acquired some eminence, has become a leading patriot, and is one of Le Bon, the representative's, privy counsellors. Fleury has renewed his acquaintance with this man, has consulted him upon our situation, and obtained a promise that he will use his interest with Le Bon in our behalf. Under this splendid patronage, it is not unlikely but we may get an order to be transferred to Amiens, or, perhaps, procure our entire liberation. We have already written to Le Bon on the subject, and Fleury is to have a conference with our friend the tailor in a few days to learn the success of his mediation; so that, I trust, the business will not be long in suspension.

pence.—We have had a most indulgent guard to-day, who, by suffering the servant to enter a few paces within the gate, afforded us an opportunity of hearing this agreeable intelligence; as also, by way of episode, that boots being wanted for the cavalry, all the boots in the town were last night put in requisition, and as Fleury was unluckily gone to bed before the search was made at his inn, he found himself this morning very unceremoniously left bootless. He was once a famous patriot, and the oracle of Mad. de ——'s household; but our confinement had already shaken his principles, and this seizure of his “superb English boots” has, I believe, completed his defection.

Oct. 25. I have discontinued my journal for three days to attend my friend, Mad. de ——, who has been ill. Uneasiness, and want of air and exercise, had brought on a little fever, which, by the usual mode of treatment in this country, has been considerably increased. Her disorder did not indeed much alarm me, but I cannot say as much of her medical assistants, and it seems to me to be almost supernatural that she has escaped the jeopardy of their prescriptions. In my own illness I had trusted to nature, and my recollection of what had been ordered

ordered me on similar occasions ; but for Mad. de — I was less confident, and desirous of having better advice, begged a physician might be immediately sent for. Had her disorder been an apoplexy, she must infallibly have died, for as no person, not even the faculty, can enter, without an order from the municipal Divan, half a day elapsed before this order could be procured. At length the physician and surgeon arrived, and I know not why the learned professions should impose on us more by one exterior than another ; but I own, when I saw the physician appear in a white camblet coat, lined with rose colour, and the surgeon with dirty linen, and a gold button and loop to his hat, I began to tremble for my friend. My feminine prejudices did not, however, in this instance, deceive me. After the usual questions, the patient was declared in a fever, and condemned to cathartics, bleeding, and “ *bon bouillons* ;” that is to say, greasy beef soup, in which there is never an œconomy of onions.—When they weré departed, I could not help expressing my surprize that people’s lives should be entrusted to such hands, observing, at the same time, to the Baron de L——, (who is lodged in the same apartment with Mad. de —,) that the French must never expect men, whose education

tion fitted them for the profession, would become physicians, while they continued to be paid at the rate of twenty pence per visit. Yet, replied the Baron, if they make twenty visits a day, they gain forty livres—" *et c'est de quoi vivre.*"* It is undeniably *de quoi vivre*, but as long as a mere subsistence is the only prospect of a physician, the French must be content to have their fevers cured by "*drastics, phlebotomy, and beef soup.*"

They tell me we have now more than five hundred *détenus* in this single house. How so many have been wedged in I can scarcely conceive, but it seems our keeper has the art of calculating with great nicety the space requisite for a given number of bodies, and their being able to respire freely is not his affair. Those who can afford it have their dinners, with all the appurtenances, brought from the inns or *traiteurs*; and the poor cook, sleep, and eat, by scores, in the same room. I have persuaded my friend to sup as I do, upon tea; but our associates, for the most part, finding it inconvenient to have suppers brought at night, and being unwilling to submit to the same priva-

* It is a living.

tions,

tions, regale themselves with the remains of their dinner, re-cooked in their only apartments, and thus go to sleep, amidst the fumes of *perdrix à l'onion*, *œufs à la tripe*, and all the produce of a French kitchen.

It is not, as you may imagine, the Bourgeois, and less distinguished prisoners only, who indulge in these highly-seasoned repasts at the expence of inhaling the savoury atmosphere they leave behind them: the *beaux* and *petites maitresses*, among the *ci-devant*, have not less exigent appetites, nor more delicate nerves; and the *ragout* is produced at night, in spite of the odours and disorder that remain till the morrow.

I conclude, notwithstanding your English prejudices, that there is nothing unwholesome in filth, for if it were otherwise, I cannot account for our being alive. Five hundred bodies, in a state of coacervation, without even a preference for cleanliness, “think of that Master Brook.” All the forenoon the court is a receptacle for cabbage-leaves, fish-scales, leeks, &c. &c.—and as a French chambermaid usually prefers the direct road to circumambulation, the refuse of the kitchen is then washed away

away by plentiful inundations from the dressing-room—the passages are blockaded by foul plates, fragments, and bones; to which if you add the smell exhaling from hoarded apples and *gruyere* cheese, you may form some notion of the sufferings of those whose olfactory nerves are not robust. Yet this is not all—nearly every female in the house, except myself, is accompanied even here by her lap-dog, who sleeps in her room, and, not unfrequently, on her bed; and these Lesbias and Lindamiras increase the insalubrity of the air, and colonize one's stockings by sending forth daily emigrations of fleas. For my own part, a few close November days will make me as captious and splenetic as Matthew Bramble himself. Nothing keeps me in tolerable good humour at present, but a clear frosty morning, or a high wind.

Oct. 27. I thought, when I wrote the above, that the house was really so full as to be incapable of containing more; but I did not do justice to the talents of our keeper. The last two nights has brought us an addition of several waggon loads of nuns, farmers, shopkeepers, &c. from the neighbouring towns, which he has still contrived to lodge, though much in
the

the way that he would pack goods, in bales. Should another convoy arrive, it is certain that we must sleep perpendicularly, for even now, when the beds are all arranged and occupied for the night, no one can make a diagonal movement without disturbing his neighbour.— This very sociable manner of sleeping is very far, I assure you, from promoting the harmony of the day; and I am frequently witness to the reproaches and recriminations occasioned by nocturnal misdemeanours. Sometimes the lap-dog of one dowager is accused of hostilities against that of another, and thereby producing a general chorus of the rest—then a four-footed favourite strays from the bed of his mistress, and takes possession of a General's uniform—and there are female *somnambules*, who alarm the modesty of a pair of Bishops, and suspended officers, that, like Richard, warring in their dreams, cry “to arms,” to the great annoyance of those who are more inclined to sleep in peace. But, I understand, the great disturbers of the room where Mad. de ——— sleeps are two *chanoines*, whose noses are so sonorous and so untuneable as to produce a sort of duet absolutely incompatible with sleep; and one of the company is often deputed to interrupt the serenade
by

by manual application (*mais tout en badinant et avec politesse* *) to the offending parties.

All this, my dear Brother, is only ludicrous in the relation; yet for so many people to be thus huddled together without distinction of age, sex, or condition, is truly miserable.— Mad. de — is still indisposed, and while she is thus suffocated by bad air, and distracted by the various noises of the house, I see no prospect of her recovery.

Arras is the common prison of the department, and, besides this, there are a number of other houses and convents in the town appropriated to the same use, and all equally full. God knows when these iniquities are to terminate! So far from having any hopes at present, the rage for arresting seems, I think, rather to increase than subside. It is supposed there are now more than three hundred thousand people in France confined under the simple imputation of being what is called “*gens suspect* :” but as this generic term is new to you, I will, by way of explanation, particularize the several species as classed by the Convention, and then

* But all in pleasantry, and with politeness.

described

described by Chaumette, solicitor for the city of Paris;* and it must be allowed by all who reside

* Decree concerning suspected people :

“ Art. I. Immediately after the promulgation of the present decree, all suspected persons that are found on the territory of the republic, and who are still at large, shall be put under arrest.

“ II. Are deemed suspicious, those who by their connections, their conversation, or their writings, declare themselves partizans of tyranny or fœderation, and enemies to liberty—Those who have not demonstrated their means of living or the performance of their civic duties, in the manner prescribed by the law of March last—Those who, having been suspended from public employments by the Convention or its Commissioners, are not reinstated therein—Those of the *ci-devant noblesse*, who have not invariably manifested their attachment to the revolution, and in general all the fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and agents of emigrants—All who have emigrated between the 1st of July, 1789, and 8th of April, 1792.

“ III. The execution of the decree is confided to the Committees of Inspection. The individuals arrested shall be taken to the houses of confinement appointed for their reception. They are allowed to take with them such only of their effects as are strictly necessary, the guards set upon them shall be paid at their expence, and they shall be kept in confinement until the peace.—The Committees of Inspection shall, without delay, transmit to the Committee of General Safety an account of the persons arrested, with the motives of their arrest. †—The civil

† If this were observed (which I doubt much) it was but a mockery, few persons ever knew the precise reason of their confinement.

reside in France at this moment, and are capable of observing the various forms under which

civil and criminal tribunals are empowered, when they deem it necessary, to detain and imprison, as suspected persons, those who being accused of crimes have nevertheless had no bill found against them, (*lieu à accusation*), or who have even been tried and acquitted."

Indications that may serve to distinguish suspicious persons, and those to whom it will be proper to refuse certificates of civism :

" I. Those who in popular assemblies check the ardour of the people, by artful speeches, by violent exclamations or threats.

" II. Those who with more caution speak in a mysterious way of the public misfortunes, who appear to pity the lot of the people, and are ever ready to spread bad news with an affectation of concern.

" III. Those who adapt their conduct and language to the circumstances of the moment—who, in order to be taken for republicans, put on a studied austerity of manners, and exclaim with vehemence against the most trifling error † in a patriot, but mollify when the crimes of an *Aristocrate* or a *Modérée* are the subject of complaint.

" IV. Those

† These trifling events were, being concerned in the massacres of September, 1792—public peculations—occasional, and even habitual robbery, forgeries, &c. &c. &c.—The second, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh classes, were particularly numerous, insomuch that I doubt whether they would not have included nineteen-twentieths of all the people in France who were honest or at all capable of reflection.

hatred for the government shelters itself, that the latter is a *chef d'œuvre* in its kind.

" IV. Those who pity avaricious farmers and shopkeepers, against whom the laws have been necessarily directed.

" V. Those who with the words liberty, country, republic, &c. constantly in their mouths, hold intercourse with *ci-devant* Nobles, *contre-revolutionnaires* Priests, Aristocrats, Feuillians, &c. and take an interest in their concerns.

" VI. Those who not having borne an active part in the revolution, endeavour to excuse themselves by urging the regular payment of their taxes, their patriotic gifts, and their service in the *Garde Nationale* by substitute or otherwise.

" VII. Those who received the republican constitution with coolness, or who intimated their pretended apprehensions for its establishment and duration.

" VIII. Those, who having done nothing against liberty, have done as little for it.

" IX. Those who do not frequent the assembly of their section, and offer, for excuse, that they are no orators, or have no time to spare from their own business.

" X. Those who speak with contempt of the constituted authorities, of the rigour of the laws, of the popular societies, and the defenders of liberty.

" XI. Those who have signed anti-revolutionary petitions, or at any time frequented unpatriotic clubs, or were known as partizans of La Fayette, and accomplices in the affair of the Champ de Mars."

Now,

cloth, a neckcloth of gaudy cotton, wadded like a horse-collar, and projecting considerably beyond his chin, a cap of red and blue cloth, embroidered in front and made much in the form of that worn by the *Pierrot* of a pantomime, with one, or sometimes a pair, of ear-rings, about the size of a large curtain-ring! Finally, he crops his hair, and carefully encourages the growth of an enormous pair of whiskers, which he does not fail to perfume with volumes of tobacco smoke. He, however, who is ambitious of still greater eminence, disdains these fopperies, and effects an appearance of filth and rags, which he dignifies with the appellation of stern republicanism and virtuous poverty; and thus, by means of a thread-bare coat out at elbows, wooden shoes, and a red woollen cap, the rich hope to secure their wealth, and the covetous and intriguing to acquire lucrative employments.—Roland, I think, was the founder of these modern Franciscans, and with this miserable affectation he machinated the death of the King, and, during some months, procured for himself the exclusive direction of the government.

All these patriots by prescription and system have likewise a peculiar and appropriated dialect

elect—they address every one by the title of *Citizen*, thee and thou indistinctly, and talk of nothing but the agents of Pitt and Cobourg, the coalesced tyrants, royal ogres, satellites of the despots, automaton slaves, and *anthropophagi*; and if they revert to their own prosperous state, and this very happy country, it is, *un peuple libre, un peuple heureux*, and *par excellence la terre de la liberté*.—It is to be observed, that those with whom these pompous expressions are most familiar, are officers employed in the war-like service of mutilating the wooden saints in churches, and arresting old women whom they encounter without national cockades; or members of the municipalities, now reduced to execute the offices of constables, and whose chief functions are to hunt out suspected people, or make domiciliary visits in quest of concealed eggs and butter. But, above all, this democratic oratory is used by tailors, shoemakers, &c.* of the Committees of Inspection,

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* For some months the departments were infested by people of this description—corrupt, ignorant, and insolent. Their motives of arrest were usually the hope of plunder, or the desire of distressing those whom they had been used to look upon as their superiors.—At Arras it sufficed even to have disobliged the wives of these miscreants to become the object

to whom the Representatives on mission have delegated their unlimited powers, who arrest much on the principle of Jack Cade, and with whom it is a crime to read and write, or to appear decently dressed. These ridiculous accoutrements, and this magnificent phraseology, are in themselves very harmless; but the ascendancy which such a class of people are taking has become a subject of just alarm.—The whole administration of the country is now in the hands of uninformed and necessitous profligates, swindlers, men already condemned by the laws, and who, if the revolution had not given them “place and office,” would have been at the galleys, or in prison.* To these may be added a few

object of persecution. In some places they arrested with the most barbarous caprice, even without the shadow of a reason. At Hesdin, a small town in Artois, Dumont left the Mayor *carte blanche*, and in one night two hundred people were thrown into prison. Every where these low and obscure dominators reigned without controul, and so much were the people intimidated, that, instead of daring to complain, they treated their new tyrants with the most servile adulation.—I have seen a *ci-devant* Comtesse coquetting with all her might a Jacobin tailor, and the richest merchants of a town soliciting very humbly the good offices of a dealer in old clothes.

* One of the administrators of the department de la Somme (which, however, was more decently composed than many others,)

a few men of weak character, and unsteady principles, who remain in office because they fear to resign; and a few, and but very few, ignorant fanatics, who really imagine they are free because they can molest and destroy with impunity all they have hitherto been taught to respect, and drink treble the quantity they did formerly.

Oct. 30. For some days the guards have been so untractable, and the croud at the door has been so great, that Fleury was obliged to make various efforts before he could communicate the result of his negociation. He has at length found means to inform us, that his friend the tailor had exerted all his interest in our favour, but

others,) was, before the revolution, convicted of house-breaking, and another of forgery; and it has since been proved on various occasions, particularly on the trial of the ninety-four *Nantais*, that the revolutionary committees were, for the most part, composed of the very refuse of society—adventurers, thieves, and even assassins; and it would be difficult to imagine a crime that did not there find reward and protection.—In vain were the privileges of the nobility abolished, and religion proscribed. A new privileged order arose in the Jacobins, and guilt of every kind, without the semblance of penitence, found an asylum in these committees, and an inviolability more sacred than that afforded by the demolished altars.

that Dumont and Le Bon (as often happens between neighbouring potentates) are at war, and their enmity being in some degree subject to their mutual fears, neither will venture to liberate any prisoner arrested by the other, lest such a disposition to clemency should be seized on by his rival as a ground of accusation.*—All, therefore, that can be obtained is, a promise to have us removed to Amiens in a short time; and I understand the *détenus* are there treated with consideration, and that no *tribunal révolutionnaire* has yet been established.

My mind will be considerably more at ease if this removal can be effected. Perhaps we may not be in more real danger here than at any

* But if they did not free the enemies of each other, they revenged themselves by throwing into prison all their mutual friends—for the temper of the times was such, that, though these Representatives were expressly invested with unlimited powers, they did not venture to set any one at liberty without a multitude of forms and a long attendance: on the contrary, they arrested without any form at all, and allowed their myrmidons to harass and confine the persons and sequester the property of all whom they judged proper.—It seemed to have been an elementary principle with those employed by the government at this time, that they risked nothing in doing all the mischief they could, and that they erred only in not doing enough.

other

other place, but it is not realities that constitute the misery of life; and situated as we are, the imagination must be phlegmatic indeed, which does not create and exaggerate enough to prevent the possibility of ease.—We are, as I before observed, placed as it were within the jurisdiction of the Guillotine; and I have learned “a secret of our prison-house” to day which Mad. de —— had hitherto concealed from me, and which has rendered me still more anxious to quit it. Several of our fellow-prisoners, whom I supposed only transferred to other houses, have been taken away to undergo the ceremony of a trial, and from thence to the scaffold. These judicial massacres are now become common, and the repetition of them has destroyed at once the sense of humanity and the sense of justice. Familiarized to executions, the thoughtless and sanguinary people behold with equal indifference the guilty or innocent victim; and the Guillotine has not only ceased to be an object of horror, but is become almost a source of amusement.*

The

* At Arras this horrid instrument of death was what they called *en permanence*, (stationary,) and so little regard was paid to the morals of the people, (I say the morals, because every thing which tends to destroy their humanity renders them

The dark and ferocious character of Le Bon develops itself hourly: the whole department trembles

them vicious,) that it was often left from one execution to another with the ensanguined traces of the last victim but too evident.—Children were taught to amuse themselves by making models of the Guillotine, with which they destroyed flies, and even animals. On the Pontneuf, at Paris, a sort of puppet-show was exhibited daily, whose boast it was to give a very exact imitation of a *guillotinage*; and the burthen of a popular song current for some months was “*Dansons la Guillotine*.”—On the 21st of January, 1794, the anniversary of the King's death, the Convention were invited to celebrate it on the “*Place de la Revolution*,” where, during the ceremony, and in presence of the whole legislative body, several people were executed. It is true, Bourbon, one of the Deputies, complained of this indecency; but not so much on account of the circumstance itself, as because it gave some of the people an opportunity of telling him in a sort of way he might probably deem prophetic, that one of the victims was a Representative of the People. The Convention pretended to order that some enquiry should be made why at such a moment such a place was chosen; but the enquiry came to nothing, and I have no doubt but the executions were purposely intended as analogous to the ceremony.—It was proved that Le Bon, on an occasion when he chose to be a spectator of some executions he had been the cause of, suspended the operation while he read the newspapers aloud, in order, as he said, that the aristocrats might go out of the world with the additional mortification of learning the success of the republican arms in their last moments.

The

trembles before him ; and those who have least merited persecution are, with reason, the most apprehensive. The most cautious prudence of conduct, the most undeviating rectitude in those who are by their fortune or rank obnoxious to the tyrant, far from contributing to their security, only mark them out for a more early sacrifice. What is still worse, these horrors are not likely to terminate, because he is allowed to pay out of the treasury of the department the mob that are employed to *popularize* and applaud them.—I hope, in a few days, we shall receive our permission to depart. My impatience is a malady, and, for nearly the first time in my life, I am sensible of *ennui* ; not the *ennui* occasioned by want of amusement, but that which is the effect of unquiet expectation, and which makes both the mind and body restless and incapable of attending to any thing. I am incessantly haunted by the idea that the companion

The people of Brest were suffered to behold, I had almost said to be amused with (for if those who order such spectacles are detestable, the people that permit them are not free from blame,) the sight of twenty-five heads ranged in a line, and still convulsed with the agonies of death.—The cant word for the Guillotine was "*our holy mother*;" and verdicts of condemnation were called prizes in the "*Sainte Lotterie*"—holy lottery.

of

of to-day may to-morrow expire under the Guillotine, that the common acts of social intercourse may be explained into intimacy, intimacy into the participation of imputed treasons, and the fate of those with whom we are associated become our own. It appears both useless and cruel to have brought us here, nor do I yet know any reason why we were not all removed to Amiens, except it was to avoid exposing to the eyes of the people in the places through which we must pass too large a number of victims at once.— The cause of our being removed from Peronne is indeed avowed, as it is at present a rule not to confine people at the place of their residence, lest they should have too much facility of communication with, or assistance from, their friends.* We should doubtless have remained at Arras until some change in public affairs had procured our release, but for the fortunate discovery of the man I have mentioned; and the trifling favour of removal from one prison to another has been obtained only by *certain arrangements* which Fleury has made with this

* In some departments the nobles and priests arrested were removed from ten to twenty leagues distant from their homes; and if they happened to have relations living at the places where they were confined, these last were forbidden to reside there, or even to travel that way.

'subordinate

subordinate agent of tyranny, and in which justice or consideration for us has had no share. Alas! are we not miserable? is not the country miserable, when our only resource is in the vices of those who govern?—It is uncertain when we shall be ordered from hence—it may happen when we least expect it, even in the night, so that I shall not attempt to write again till we have changed our situation. The risk is at present too serious, and you must allow my desire of amusing you to give way to my solicitude for my own preservation.

Bicêtre, at Amiens, Nov. 18.

NOUS *voilà donc encore, logés à la nation*; that is to say, in the common prison of the department, amidst the thieves, vagabonds, maniacs, &c. confined by the old police, and the *gens suspects* recently arrested by the new.—I write from the end of a sort of elevated barn, sixty or seventy feet long, where the interstices of the tiles admit the wind from all quarters, and scarcely exclude the rain, and where an old screen and some curtains only separate Mad. de —, myself, and our servants, from sixty priests,

priests, most of them old, sick, and as wretched as men *can* be, who are pious and resigned. Yet even here I feel comparatively at ease, and an escape from the jurisdiction of Le Bon and his merciless tribunal seems cheaply purchased at the expence of our personal inconvenience. I do not pretend to philosophize or *stoicize*, or to any thing else which implies a contempt of life—I have, on the contrary, a most unheroic solicitude about my existence, and consider my removal to a place where I think we are safe as a very fortunate æra of our captivity.

After many delays and disappointments, Fleury at length procured an order, signed by the Representative, for our being transferred to Amiens, under the care of two *Gardes Nationaux*, and, of course, at our expence.—Every thing in this country wears the aspect of despotism. At twelve o'clock at night we were awakened by the officer on guard, and informed we were to depart on the morrow; and, notwithstanding the difficulty of procuring horses and carriages, it was specified, that if we did not go on the day appointed, we were not to go at all. It was, of course, late before we could surmount the various obstacles to our journey, and procure two crazy cabriolets, and
a cart

a cart for the guards, ourselves, and baggage. The days being short, we were obliged to sleep at Dourlens; and, on our arrival at the castle, which is now, as it always has been, a state-prison, we were told it was so full, that it was absolutely impossible to lodge us, and that we had better apply to the Governor, for permission to sleep at an inn. We then drove to the Governor's * house, who received us very civilly, and with very little persuasion agreed to our request. At the best of the miserable inns in the town we were informed they had no room, and that they could not accommodate us in any way whatever, except a sick officer then in the house would permit us to occupy one of two beds in his apartment.

In England it would not be very decent to make such a request, or to accept such an accommodation. In France, neither the one nor the other is unusual, and we had suffered lately

* The Commandant had been originally a private soldier in the regiment of Dillon.—I know not how he had obtained his advancement, but, however obtained, it proved fatal to him: he was, a very short time after I saw him, guillotined at Arras, for having borrowed money of a prisoner. His real crime was, probably, treating the prisoners in general with too much consideration and indulgence; and at this period every suspicion of the kind was capital.

so many embarrassments of the kind, that we were, if not reconciled, at least inured to them. Before, however, we could determine, the gentleman had been informed of our situation, and came to offer his services. You may judge of our surprize when we found in the stranger, who had his head bound up and his arm in a sling, General —, a relation of Mad. de —. We had now, therefore, less scruple in sharing his room, though we agreed, notwithstanding, only to repose a few hours in our clothes.

After taking some tea, the remainder of the evening was dedicated to reciprocal conversation of all kinds; and our guards having acquaintance in the town, and knowing it was impossible for us to escape, even were we so inclined, very civilly left us to ourselves. We found the General had been wounded at Maubeuge, and was now absent on *congé* for the recovery of his health. He talked of the present state of public affairs like a military man who is attached to his profession, and who thinks it his duty to fight at all events, whatever the rights or merits of those that employ him. He confessed, indeed, that they were repulsing their external enemies, only to confirm the power of those who were infinitely more

more to be dreaded at home, and that the condition of a General was more to be commiserated at this time than any other: if he miscarry, disgrace and the Guillotine await him—if he be successful, he gains little honour, becomes an object of jealousy, and assists in rivetting the chains of his country. He said, the armies were for the most part licentious and insubordinate, but that the political discipline was terrible—the soldiers are allowed to drink, pillage, and insult their officers with impunity, but all combinations are rigorously suppressed, the slightest murmur against the Representative on mission is treason, and to disapprove of a decree of the Convention, death—that every man of any note in the army is beset with spies, and if they leave the camp on any occasion, it is more necessary to be on their guard against these wretches than against an ambuscade of the enemy; and he related a circumstance which happened to himself as an example of what he mentioned, and which will give you a tolerable idea of the present system of government.—After the relief of Dunkirk, being quartered in the neighbourhood of St. Omer, he occasionally went to the town on his private concerns. One day, while he was waiting at the inn where he intended to dine, two young men accosted him, and,

after engaging him in a general conversation for some time, began to talk with great freedom, though with an affected caution of public men and measures, of the banditti who governed, the tyranny that was exercised, and the supineness of the people: in short, of all those too poignant truths which constitute the *leze nation* of the day. Monf. de — was not at first very attentive, but finding their discourse become still more liberal, it excited his suspicions, and casting his eyes on a glass opposite to where they were conversing, he perceived a sort of intelligence between them, which immediately suggested to him the profession of his companions; and calling to a couple of dragoons who had attended him, ordered them to arrest the two gentlemen as aristocrats, and convey them without ceremony to prison. They submitted, seemingly more surprized than alarmed, and in two hours the General received a note from a higher power, desiring him to set them at liberty, as they were agents of the republic.

Duquesnoy, one of the representatives now with the Northern army, is ignorant and brutal in the extreme. He has made his brother (who, as well as himself, used to retail hops in the streets of St. Pol,) a General, and in order to deliver

deliver him from rivals and critics, he breaks, suspends, arrests, and sends to the Guillotine every officer of any merit that comes in his way. After the battle of Maubeuge, he arrested a General Bardell,* for accomodating a wounded prisoner of distinction (I think a relation of the Prince of Cobourg) with a bed, and tore with his own hands the epaulette from the shoulders of those Generals whose divisions had not sustained the combat so well as the others. His temper, naturally savage and choleric, is irritated to fury by the habit of drinking large quantities of strong liquors; and Mad. de ——'s relation assured us, that he had himself seen him take the Mayor of Avesnes (a venerable old man, who was presenting him some petition that regarded the town,) by the hair, and throw him on the ground, with the gestures of an enraged cannibal. He also confined one of his fellow-deputies in the tower of Guise, upon a very frivolous pretext, and merely on his own authority. In fact, I scarcely remember half the horrors told us of this man; and I shall only remind you, that he has an unlimited controul over the civil constitution of the Northern

* The Generals Bardell and D'Avesnes, and several others, were afterwards guillotined at Paris.

army, and over the whole department of the North.

You, I suppose, will be better informed of military events than we are, and I mention our friend's conjecture, that (besides an enormous number of killed) the wounded at Maubeuge amounted to twelve or fourteen thousand, only to remark the deception which is still practised on the people; for no published account ever allowed the number to be more than a few hundreds.—Besides these professional details, the General gave us some very unpleasant family ones. On returning to his father's chateau, where he hoped to be taken care of while his wounds were curing, he found every room in it under seals, three guards in possession, his two sisters arrested at St. Omer, where they happened to be on a visit, and his father and mother confined in separate houses of detention at Arras. After visiting them, and making some ineffectual applications for their relief, he came to the neighbourhood of Dourlens, expecting to find an asylum with an uncle, who had hitherto escaped the general persecution of the gentry. Here again his disappointment and chagrin were renewed: his uncle had been carried off to Amiens the morning of his arrival, and the
house

house rendered inaccessible, by the usual affixture of seals, and an attendant pair of myrmidons to guard them from infraction. Thus excluded from all his family habitations, he had taken up his residence for a day or two at the inn where we met him, his intention being to return to Arras.

In the morning we made our adieus and pursued our journey; but, tenacious of this comparative liberty and the enjoyment of pure air, we prevailed on our conductors to let us dine on the road, so that we lingered with the unwillingness of truant children, and did not reach Amiens until dark. When we arrived at the Hotel de Ville, one of the guards enquired how we were to be disposed of. Unfortunately for us, Dumont happened to be there himself, and on hearing we were sent from Arras by order of Le Bon, declared most furiously (for our Representative is subject to choler since his accession to greatness) that he would have no prisoners received from Arras, and that we should sleep at the Conciergerie, and be conveyed back again on the morrow. Terrified at this menace, we persuaded the guard to represent to Dumont that we had been sent to Amiens at our own instance, and that we had been originally arrested

by himself, and were therefore desirous of returning to the department where he was on mission, and where we had more reason to expect justice than at Arras. Mollified, perhaps, by this implied preference of his authority, he consented that we should remain for the present at Amiens, and ordered us to be taken to the Bicêtre. Whoever has been used to connect with the word Bicêtre the idea of the prison so named at Paris, must recoil with horror upon hearing they are destined to such an abode. Mad. de —, yet weak from the remains of her illness, laid hold of me in a transport of grief; but, far from being able to calm or console her, my thoughts were so bewildered that I did not, till we alighted at the gate, begin to be really sensible of our situation. The night was dark and dreary, and our first entrance was into a kitchen, such as my imagination had pictured the subterraneous one of the robbers in Gil Blas. Here we underwent the ceremony of having our pocket-books searched for papers and letters, and our trunks rummaged for knives and fire-arms. This done, we were shown to the lodging I have described, and the poor priests, already insufferably crowded, were obliged almost to join their beds in order to make room for us.—I will not pain you by a recital of all the embarrassments and
distresses

distresses we had to surmount before we could even rest ourselves. We were in want of every thing, and the rules of the prison such, that it was nearly impossible, for some time, to procure any thing: but the human mind is more flexible than we are often disposed to imagine it; and in two days we were able to see our situation in its best point of view, (that is, as an escape from Arras,) and the affair of submitting our bodies to our minds must be atchieved by time.—We have now been here a week. We have sounded the very depth of humiliation, taken our daily allowance of bread with the rest of the prisoners, and contracted a most friendly intimacy with the gaoler.

I have discovered since our arrival, that the order for transferring us hither described me as a native of the Low Countries. I know not how this has happened, but my friend has insisted on my not rectifying the mistake, for as the French talk continually of re-conquering Brabant, she persuades herself such an event would procure me my liberty. I neither desire the one nor expect the other; but, to indulge her, I speak no English, and avoid two or three of my countrymen who I am told are here. There have been also some English families who

were lately removed, but the French pronounce our names so strangely, that I have not been able to learn who they were.

November 19.

THE English in general, especially of late years, have been taught to entertain very formidable notions of the Bastille and other state prisons of the ancient government, and they were, no doubt, horrid enough; yet I have not hitherto been able to discover that those of the new republic are any way preferable. The only difference is, that the great number of prisoners which, for want of room, are obliged to be heaped together, makes it impossible to exclude them as formerly from communication, and instead of being maintained at the public expence, they now, with great difficulty, are able to procure wherewithal to eat at their own. Our present habitation is an immense building, about a quarter of a mile from the town, intended originally for the common gaol of the province. The situation is damp and unwholesome, and the water so bad, that I should suppose a long continuance here of such a number of prisoners must be productive of endemical disorders.

disorders. Every avenue to the house is guarded, and no one is permitted to stop and look up at the windows, under pain of becoming a resident. We are strictly prohibited from all external intercourse, except by writing; and every scrap of paper, though but an order for a dinner, passes the inquisition of three different people before it reaches its destination, and, of course, many letters and notes are mislaid, and never sent at all.—There is no court or garden in which the prisoners are allowed to walk, and the only exercise they can take is in damp passages, or a small yard, (perhaps thirty feet square,) which often smells so detestably, that the atmosphere of the house itself is less mephitic.

Our fellow-captives are a motley collection of the victims of nature, of justice, and of tyranny—of lunatics who are insensible of their situation, of thieves who deserve it, and of political criminals whose guilt is the accident of birth, the imputation of wealth, or the clerical profession. Among the latter is the Bishop of Amiens, whom I recollect to have mentioned in a former letter. You will wonder why a constitutional Bishop, once popular with the democratic party, should be thus treated. The real

real motive was, probably, to degrade in his person a minister of religion—the ostensible one, a dispute with Dumont at the Jacobin club. As the times grew alarming, the Bishop, perhaps, thought it politic to appear at the club, and the Representative meeting him there one evening, began to interrogate him very rudely with regard to his opinion of the marriage of priests. M. Dubois replied, that when it was officially incumbent on him to explain himself, he would do so, but that he did not think the club a place for such discussions, or something to this purpose. “*Tu prevariques donc!—Je t’arrête sur le champ:**” the Bishop was accordingly arrested at the instant, and conducted to the Bicêtre, without even being suffered to go home and furnish himself with necessaries; and the seals being immediately put on his effects, he has never been able to obtain a change of linen and clothes, or any thing else—this too at a time when the pensions of the clergy are ill paid, and every article of clothing so dear as to be almost unpurchasable by moderate fortunes, and when those who might otherwise be disposed to aid or accommodate their friends, abandon them through fear of being implicated in their misfortunes.

* What you prevaricate!—I arrest you instantly.

But

But the Bishop, yet in the vigor of life, is better capable of enduring these hardships than most of the poor priests with whom he is associated: the greater number of them are very old men, with venerable grey locks—and their tattered clerical habits, scanty meals, and wretched beds, give me many an heart-ache. God send the constant sight of so much misery may not render me callous!—It is certain, there are people here, who, whatever their feelings might have been on this occasion at first, seem now little affected by it. Those who are too much familiarized with scenes of wretchedness, as well as those to whom they are unknown, are not often very susceptible; and I am sometimes disposed to cavil with our natures, that the sufferings which ought to excite our benevolence, and the prosperity that enables us to relieve them, should ever have a contrary effect. Yet this is so true, that I have scarcely ever observed even the poor considerate towards each other—and the rich, if they are frequently charitable, are not always compassionate.*

Nov.

* Our situation at the Bicêtre, though terrible for people unused to hardships or confinement, and, in fact, wretched as personal inconvenience could make it, was yet Elysium, compared to the prisons of other departments. At St. Omer, the prisoners

Nov. 20. Besides the gentry and clergy of this department, we have likewise for companions

prisoners were frequently disturbed at midnight by the entrance of men into their apartments, who, with the detestable ensign of their order, (red caps,) and pipes in their mouths, came by way of frolic to search the pockets, trunks, &c.—At Montreuil, the *Maison d'Arrêt* were under the direction of a Commissary, whose behaviour to the female prisoners was too atrocious for recital—two young women, in particular, who refused to *purchase* milder treatment, were locked up in a room for seventeen days.—Soon after I left Arras, every prison became a den of horror. The miserable inhabitants were subject to the agents of Le Bon, whose avarice, cruelty, and licentiousness, were beyond any thing a humane mind can imagine. Sometimes the houses were suddenly surrounded by an armed force, the prisoners turned out in the depth of winter for several hours into an open court, during the operation of robbing them of their pocket-books, buckles, ear-rings, or whatever of value they had about them. At other times they were visited by the same military array, and deprived of their linen and clothes. Their wine and provisions were likewise taken from them in the same manner—wives were separated from their husbands, parents from their children, old men treated with the most savage barbarity, and young women with an indecency still more abominable. All communication, either by writing or otherwise, was often prohibited for many days together, and an order was once given to prevent even the entry of provisions, which was not revoked till the prisoners became absolutely distressed. At the Hotel Dieu they were forbid to draw more than a single jug of water in twenty-four hours. At the *Providence*, the well was left three days without a cord, and when the unfortunate females confined there

panions a number of inhabitants of Lille, arrested under circumstances singularly atrocious, even where atrocity is the characteristic of almost every proceeding.—In the month of August a decree was passed to oblige all the nobility, clergy, and their servants, as well as all those persons who had been in the service of emigrants, to depart from Lille in eight-and-forty hours, and prohibiting their residence within twenty leagues from the frontiers. Thus banished from their own habitations, they took refuge in different towns, at the prescribed dis-

there procured people to beg water of the neighbours, they were refused, "because it was for prisoners, and if Le Bon heard of it he might be displeased!" Windows were blocked up, not to prevent escape, but to exclude air; and when the general scarcity rendered it impossible for the prisoners to procure sufficient food for their support, their small portions were diminished at the gate, under pretext of searching for letters, &c. —People, respectable both for their rank and character, were employed to clean the prisons and privies, while their low and insolent tyrants looked on and insulted them. On an occasion when one of the *Maison d'Arrêts* was on fire, guards were planted round, with orders to fire upon those that should attempt to escape.—My memory has but too faithfully recorded these and still greater horrors; but curiosity would be gratified but too dearly by the relation.

I added the above note some months after writing the letter to which it is annexed.

tance ;

tance ; but, almost as soon as they were arrived, and had been at the expence of settling themselves, they were arrested as strangers,* and conducted to prison.

It will not be improper to notice here the conduct of the government towards the towns that have been besieged. Thionville,† to whose gallant defence in 1792 France owed the retreat of the Prussians and the safety of Paris, was afterwards continually reproached with aristocracy ; and when the inhabitants sent a deputation to solicit an indemnity for the damage the town had sustained during the bombardment, a member of the Convention threatened them from the tribune with “ *indemnités à coup de bâton !* ” that is, in our vernacular tongue, with a good threshing.

* I have before, I believe, noticed that the term *étranger* at this time did not exclusively apply to foreigners, but to such as had come from one town to another, who were at inns or visiting their friends.

† Wimpfen, who commanded there, and whose conduct at the time was enthusiastically admired, was driven, most probably by the ingratitude and ill treatment of the Convention, to head a party of the Fœderalists.—These legislators perpetually boast of imitating and surpassing the Romans, and it is certain their ingratitude has made more than one Coriolanus. The difference is, that they are not jealous for the liberty of the country, but for their own personal safety.

The

The inhabitants of Lisle, who had been equally serviceable in stopping the progress of the Austrians, for a long time petitioned without effect to obtain the sums already voted for their relief. The *noblesse*, and others from thence who have been arrested, as soon as it was known that they were *Lillois*, were treated with peculiar rigour;* and an *armée révolutionnaire*,† with

* The Commandant of Lisle, on his arrival at the Bicêtre, was stripped of a considerable sum of money, and a quantity of plate he had unluckily brought with him by way of security. Out of this he is to be supplied with fifty livres at a time in paper, which, according to the exchange and the price of every thing, is, I suppose, about half a guinea.

† The *armée révolutionnaire* was first raised by order of the Jacobins, for the purpose of searching the countries for provisions, and conducting them to Paris. Under this pretext, a levy was made of all the most desperate ruffians that could be collected together. They were divided into companies, each with its attendant Guillotine, and then distributed in the different departments: they had extraordinary pay, and seem to have been subject to no discipline. Many of them were distinguished by the representation of a Guillotine in miniature, and a head just severed, on their cartouch-boxes. It would be impossible to describe half the enormities committed by these banditti: wherever they went they were regarded as a scourge, and every heart shrunk at their approach. Lecointre, of Versailles, a member of the Convention, complained that a band of these wretches entered the house of a farmer, one of his tenants, by night, and, after binding the family hand and foot,

with the Guillotine for a standard, has lately harrassed the town and environs of Lisle, as though it were a conquered country. The gar-rison and national guard, indignant at the horrors they committed, obliged them to decamp. Even the people of Dunkirk, whose resistance to the English, while the French army was collecting together for their relief, was perhaps of more consequence than ten victories, have been since intimidated with Commissioners, and Tribunals, and Guillotines, as much as if they had been convicted of selling the town. In short, under this philanthropic republic, persecution seems to be very exactly proportioned to the services rendered. A jealous and suspicious government does not forget, that the same

foot, and helping themselves to whatever they could find, they placed the farmer with his bare feet on the chaffing-dish of hot ashes, by way of forcing him to discover where he had secreted his plate and money, which having secured, they set all the vessels of liquor running, and then retired.

You are not to suppose this a robbery, and the actors common thieves; all was in the usual form—" *au nom de la loi*," and for the service of the republic; and I do not mention this instance as remarkable, otherwise than as having been noticed in the Convention. A thousand events of this kind, even still more atrocious, have happened; but the sufferers who had not the means of defence as well as of complaint, were obliged, through policy, to be silent.

energy

energy of character which has enabled a people to defend themselves against an external enemy, may also make them less submissive to domestic oppression; and, far from repaying them with the gratitude to which they have a claim, it treats them, on all occasions, as opponents, whom it both fears and hates.

Nov. 22. We have been walking in the yard to-day with General Laveneur, who, for an act which in any other country would have gained him credit, is in *this* suspended from his command.—When Custine, a few weeks before his death, left the army to visit some of the neighbouring towns, the command devolved on Laveneur, who received, along with other official papers, a list of counter-signs, which, having probably been made some time, and not altered conformably to the changes of the day, contained, among others, the words *Condorcet—Constitution*; and these were in their turn given out. On Custine's trial, this was made a part of his accusation. Laveneur, recollecting that the circumstance had happened in the absence of Custine, thought it incumbent on him to take the blame, if there were any, on himself, and wrote to Paris to explain the matter as it really stood; but his candour, without availing Cus-

tine, drew persecution on himself, and the only notice taken of his letter was an order to arrest him. After being dragged from one town to another, like a criminal, and often lodged in dungeons and common prisons, he was at length deposited here.

I know not if the General's principles are republican, but he has a very democratic pair of whiskers, which he occasionally strokes, and seems to cherish with much affection. He is, however, a gentleman-like man, and expresses such anxiety for the fate of his wife and children, who are now at Paris, that one cannot but be interested in his favour.—As the agents of the republic never err on the side of omission, they arrested *Monf. Laveneur's* aid-de-camp with him; and another officer of his acquaintance, who was suspended, and living at Amiens, has shared the same fate, only for endeavouring to procure him a trifling accommodation. This gentleman called on Dumont, to beg that General Laveneur's servant might be permitted to go in and out of the prison on his master's errands. After breakfasting together, and conversing on very civil terms, Dumont told him, that as he concerned himself so much in behalf of his friend, he would send him to
keep

keep the latter company, and at the conclusion of his visit he was sent prisoner to the Bicêtre.

Perhaps the greater part of between three and four hundred thousand people, now imprisoned *on suspicion*, have been arrested for reasons as little substantial.—I begin to fear my health will not resist the hardship of a long continuance here. We have no fire-place, and are sometimes perished with partial winds from the doors and roof; at others faint and heart-sick with the unhealthy air produced by so many living bodies. The water we drink is not preferable to the air we breathe; the bread (which is now every where scarce and bad) contains such a mixture of barley, rye, damaged wheat, and trash of all kinds, that, far from being nourished by it, I lose both my strength and appetite daily.—Yet these are not the worst of our sufferings. Shut out from all society, victims of a despotic and unprincipled government capable of every thing, and ignorant of the fate which may await us, we are occasionally oppressed by a thousand melancholy apprehensions. I might, indeed, have boasted my fortitude, and have made myself an heroine on paper at as small an expence of words as it has cost me to record my cowardice: but I am

of an unlucky conformation, and think either too much or too little (I know not which) for a female philosopher; besides, philosophy is getting into such ill repute, that not possessing the reality, the name of it is not worth assuming.

A poor old priest told me just now, (while Angelique was mending his black coat with white thread,) that they had left at the place where they were last confined a large quantity of linen, and other necessaries; but, by the express orders of Dumont, they were not allowed to bring a single article away with them. The keeper, too, it seems, was threatened with dismissal, for supplying one of them with a shirt.—In England, where, I believe, you ally political expediency as much as you can with justice and humanity, these cruelties, at once little and refined, will appear incredible; and the French themselves, who are at least ashamed of, if they are not pained by, them, are obliged to seek refuge in the fancied palliative of a “state of revolution.”—Yet, admitting the necessity of confining the persons of these old men, there can be none for heaping them together in filth and misery, and adding to the sufferings of years and infirmity by those of cold and want.

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If, indeed, a state of revolution require such deeds, and imply an apology for them, I cannot but wish the French had remained as they were, for I know of no political changes that can compensate for turning a civilized nation into a people of savages.

It is not surely the eating acorns or *ragouts*, a well-powdered head, or one decorated with red feathers, that constitutes the difference between barbarism and civilization; and, I fear, if the French proceed as they have begun, the advantage of morals will be considerably on the side of the *unrefined* savages.

The conversation of the prison has been much engaged by the fate of an English gentleman, who lately destroyed himself in a *Maison d'Arrêt* at Amiens. His confinement had at first deeply affected his spirits, and his melancholy increasing at the prospect of a long detention, terminated in deranging his mind, and occasioned this last act of despair.—I never hear of suicide without a compassion mingled with terror, for, perhaps, simple pity is too light an emotion to be excited by an event which reminds us, that we are susceptible of a degree of misery too great to be borne—too strong for the efforts of

instinct, reflection, and religion.—I could moralize on the necessity of habitual patience, and the benefit of preparing the mind for great evils by a philosophic endurance of little ones; but I am at the Bicêtre—the winds whistle round me—I am beset by petty distresses, and we do not expatiate to advantage on endurance while we have any thing to endure.—Seneca's contempt for the things of this world was doubtless suggested in the palace of Nero. He would not have treated the subject so well in disgrace and poverty.—Do not suppose I am affecting to be pleasant, for I write in the sober sadness of conviction, that human fortitude is often no better than a pompous theory, founded on self-love and self-deception.

I was surprized at meeting among our fellow-prisoners a number of Dutch officers. I find they had been some time in the town on their parole, and were sent here by Dumont, for refusing to permit their men to work on the fortifications.—The French government and its agents despise the laws of war hitherto observed; they consider them as a sort of *aristocratie militaire*, and they pretend, on the same principle, to be enfranchised from the law of nations.—An orator of the Convention lately boasted that
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he felt himself infinitely superior to the prejudices of Grotius, Puffendorff, and Vatel, which he calls "*aristocratie diplomatique*."—Such sublime spirits think, because they differ from the rest of mankind, that they surpass them. Like Icarus, they attempt to fly, and are perpetually struggling in the mire.—Plain common sense has long pointed out a rule of action, from which all deviation is fatal, both to nations and individuals. England, as well as France, has furnished its examples; and the annals of genius in all countries are replete with the miseries of eccentricity.—Whoever has followed the course of the French revolution, will, I believe, be convinced, that the greatest evils attending on it have been occasioned by an affected contempt for received maxims. A common banditti, acting only from the desire of plunder, or men, erring only through ignorance, could not have subjugated an whole people, had they not been assisted by narrow-minded philosophers, who were eager to sacrifice their country to the vanity of making experiments, and were little solicitous whether their systems were good or bad, provided *they* were celebrated as the authors of them. Yet, where are they now? Wandering, proscribed, and trembling at the fate of their followers and accomplices.—The

Brissotines, sacrificed by a party even worse than themselves, have died without exciting either pity or admiration. Their fall was considered as the natural consequence of their exaltation, and the courage with which they met death obtained no tribute but a cold and simple comment, undistinguished from the news of the day, and ending with it.

December. Last night, after we had been asleep about an hour, (for habit, that "lulls the wet sea-boy on the high and giddy mast," has reconciled us to sleep even here,) we were alarmed by the trampling of feet, and sudden unlocking of our door. Our apprehensions gave us no time for conjecture—in a moment an ill-looking fellow entered the room with a lantern, two soldiers holding drawn swords, and a large dog! The whole company walked as it were processionally to the end of the apartment, and, after observing in silence the beds on each side, left us. It would not be easy to describe what we suffered at this moment: for my own part, I thought only of the massacres of September, and the frequent proposals at the Jacobins and the Convention for dispatching the "*gens suspect*," and really concluded I was going to terminate my existence "*revolutionnairement*."

ment." I do not now know the purport of these visits, but I find they are not unusual, and most probably intended to alarm the prisoners.

After many enquiries and messages, I have had the mortification of hearing that Mr. and Mrs. D—— were taken to Arras, and were there even before I left it. The letters sent to and from the different prisons are read by so many people, and pass through so many hands, that it is not surprizing we have not heard from each other. As far as I can learn, they had obtained leave, after their first arrest, to remove to a house in the vicinity of Dourlens for a few days, on account of Mrs. D——'s health, which had suffered by passing the summer in the town, and that at the taking of Toulon they were again arrested while on a visit, and conveyed to a *Maison d'Arrêt* at Arras. I am the more anxious for them, as it seems they were unprepared for such an event; and as the seals were put upon their effects, I fear they must be in want of every thing. I might, perhaps, have succeeded in getting them removed here, but Fleury's Arras friend, it seems, did not think, when the Convention had abolished every other part of Christianity, that they intended still to exact a partial observance

servance of the eighth article of the decalogue ; and having, in the sense of Antient Pistol, “conveyed” a little too notoriously, Le Bon has, by way of securing him from notice or pursuit, sent him to the frontiers as Commissary.

The prison, considering how many French inhabitants it contains, is tolerably quiet—to say the truth, we are not very sociable, and still less gay. Common interest establishes a sort of intimacy between those of the same apartment ; but the rest of the house pass each other, without farther intercourse than silent though significant civility. Sometimes you see a pair of unfortunate aristocrats talking politics at the end of a passage, or on a landing-place ; and here and there a bevy of females, *en deshabillé*, recounting altogether the subject of their arrest. One’s ear occasionally catches a few half-suppressed notes of a proscribed air, but the unhallowed sounds of the Carmagnole and Marseillois are never heard, and would be thought more dissonant here than the war-whoop. In fact, the only appearance of gaiety is among the ideots and lunatics.—“*Je m’enmuye furieusement*,” is the general exclamation.—An Englishman confined at the Bicêtre would express himself more forcibly, but, it is certain, the

the want of knowing how to employ themselves does not form a small part of the distresses of our fellow-prisoners; and when they tell us they are "*ennuyés*," they say, perhaps, nearly as much as they feel—for, as far as I can observe, the loss of liberty has not the same effect on a Frenchman as an Englishman. Whether this arises from political causes, or the natural indifference of the French character, I am not qualified to determine; probably from both: yet when I observe this facility of mind general, and by no means peculiar to the higher classes, I cannot myself but be of opinion, that it is more an effect of their original disposition than of their form of government; for though in England we were accustomed from our childhood to consider every man in France as liable to wake and find himself in the Bastille, or at Mont St. Michel, this formidable despotism existed more in theory than in practice; and if courtiers and men of letters were intimidated by it, the mass of the people troubled themselves very little about *Lettres de Cachet*. The revenge or suspicion of Ministers might sometimes pursue those who aimed at their power, or assailed their reputation; but the lesser gentry, the merchant, or the shopkeeper, were very seldom victims of arbitrary imprisonment—
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and I believe, amongst the evils which it was the object of the revolution to redress, this (except on the principle) was far from being of the first magnitude. I am not likely, under my present circumstances, to be an advocate for the despotism of any form of government; and I only give it as a matter of opinion, that the civil liberty of the French was not so often and generally violated,* as to influence their character in a degree to render them insensible of its loss. At any rate, we must rank it among the *bizarreries* † of this world, that the French should have been prepared, by the theory of oppression under their *old* system, for enduring the practice of it under the *new* one; and that what during the monarchy was only possible to a *few*, is under the republic almost certain to *all*.

* I remember in 1789, after the destruction of the Bastille, our compassionate countrymen were taught to believe that this tremendous prison was peopled with victims, and that even the dungeons were inhabited; yet the truth is, though it would not have told so pathetically, or have produced so much theatrical effect, there were only seven persons confined in the whole building, and certainly not one in the dungeons.

† Unaccountable whimsical events.

Amiens, Providence, Dec. 10.

WE have again, as you will perceive, changed our abode, and that too without expecting, and almost without desiring it. In my moments of fullness and despondency, I was not very solicitous about the modifications of our confinement, and little disposed to be better satisfied with one prison than another: but, heroics apart, external comforts are of some importance, and we have, in many respects, gained by our removal.

Our present habitation is a spacious building, lately a convent, and though now crowded with more prisoners by two or three hundred than it will hold conveniently, yet we are better lodged than at the Bicêtre, and we have also a large garden, good water, and, what above all is desirable, the liberty of delivering our letters or messages ourselves (in presence of the guard) to any one who will venture to approach us. Mad. de — and myself have a small cell, where we have just room to place our beds, but we have no fire-place, and the maids are obliged to sleep in an adjoining passage.

A few evenings ago, while we were at the Bicêtre, we were suddenly informed by the keeper

keeper that Dumont had sent some soldiers with an order to convey us that night to *the Providence*. We were at first rather surprized than pleased, and reluctantly gathered our baggage together with as much expedition as we could, while the men who were to escort us were exclaiming "*à la Française*" at the trifling delay this occasioned. When we had passed the gate, we found Fleury, with some porters, ready to receive our beds, and, overjoyed at having procured us a more decent prison, for, it seems, he could by no means reconcile himself to the name of Bicêtre. We had about half a mile to walk, and on the road he contrived to acquaint us with the means by which he had solicited this favour of Dumont. After advising with all Mad. de ——'s friends who were yet at liberty, and finding no one willing to make an effort in her behalf for fear of involving themselves, he discovered an old acquaintance in the "*femme de chambre*" of one of the *Representant's* mistresses.—This, for one of Fleury's sagacity, was a spring to have set the whole Convention in a ferment; and in a few days he profited so well by this female patronage, as to obtain an order for transferring us hither. On our arrival, we were informed, as usual, that the house was already full, and that there was no possibility of admitting us. We, however,

however, set up all night in the keeper's room with some other people newly-arrived like ourselves, and in the morning, after a little disputing and a pretty general derangement of the more ancient inhabitants, we were "*nichées*," as I have described to you.

We have not yet quitted our room much, but I observe that every one appears more chearful, and more studied in their toilette, than at the Bicêtre, and I am willing to infer from thence that confinement here is less insupportable.— I have been employed two days in enlarging the notes I had made in our last prison, and in making them more legible, for I ventured no farther than just to scribble with a pencil in a kind of short-hand of my own invention, and not even that without a variety of precautions. I shall be here less liable either to surprize or observation, and as soon as I have secured what I have already noted, (which I intend to-night,) I shall continue my remarks in the usual form. You will find even more than my customary incorrectness and want of method since we left Peronne; but I shall not allow your competency as a critic, until you have been a prisoner in the hands of French republicans.

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It will not be improper to notice to you a very ingenious decree of Gaston, (a member of the Convention,) who lately proposed to embark all the English now in France at Brest, and then to sink the ships.—Perhaps the Committee of Public Welfare are now in a sort of benevolent indecision, whether this, or Collot d'Herbois' gunpowder scheme, shall have the preference. Legendre's iron cage and simple hanging will, doubtless, be rejected, as too slow and formal. The mode of the day is "*les grandes mesures.*" If I be not seriously alarmed at these propositions, it is not that life is indifferent to me, or that I think the government too humane to adopt them. My tranquillity arises from reflecting that such measures would be of no political use, and that we shall most likely be soon forgotten in the multitude of more important concerns. Those, however, whom I endeavour to console by this reasoning, tell me it is nothing less than infallible, that the inutility of a crime is here no security against its perpetration, and that any project which tends to evil will sooner be remembered than one of humanity or justice.

